EMBODYING JESUS

RHETORICAL SKILLS AND STRATEGIES TOWARD PRESENTING CHRIST

TO A SECULAR AUDIENCE VALUING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

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ABSTRACT

Presenting the truth of Christ without representing the entire person of Jesus can produce harmful results in our Western culture which over-values religious tolerance. The goal of our Christian witness, therefore, must be to "Embody Jesus" rather than "Present Christ."

This thesis explores what rhetorical principles can be derived from evaluating three exemplar apologists and who represent Jesus' compassion and other-centeredness, along with his truth, to secular, postmodern audiences valuing religious tolerance. My thesis for this research project was that a person seeking to embody Jesus by displaying genuine compassion and other-centeredness through his rhetorical skills and strategies will experience success in making disciples in our postmodern, secular society which values religious tolerance.

Examining exemplars Dr. William Lane Craig, Dr. Ravi Zacharias, and Greg Koukl using a template of rhetorical skills and strategies led to the observation that it is vital for a Christian to present God not merely through speaking the words of Christ, but by displaying the complete person of Jesus; his character, his respect, and his compassion.
The message of the gospel exists in a person, not merely a set of truths. These exemplars displayed great skill and strategy in presenting the person of Jesus. This thesis confirmed the idea that the priority of our Christian witness is to use our entire rhetorical appeal to introduce people to the person, Jesus, who changed our lives.

Chapter 1

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK, PROBLEM AND SETTING, OVERVIEW AND PROJECT DESIGN

Theological Framework: A God Who Communicates

Throughout the epoch of Old Testament the Word of God (Hebrew: דברי־יהוה)

served as God's self-expression, or agent of communication. When God desired to express

his creativity, he sent his Word to create (Cf. Psalm 33:6). When God chose to express his

faithfulness, He sent his Word to rescue or redeem people (Cf. Jeremiah 1:4). When God

wished to express specific directions or imperatives, he sent his Word to speak to the

patriarchs and prophets (Cf. Psalm 107:20). The Word of God weaves in and out of the

pages of the Old Testament communicating God to his creation.

This Word of God in the Old Testament was a person, and was God by nature.

Leon Morris writes, "Such, then, is the background to John's thought. But it is not his

thought itself. He had a richer, deeper, fuller idea than that of any of his predecessors. For

him the Word is not a principle but a living Being and the source of life; not a

personification *but a Person*, and that Person divine."[1]

The Apostle John affirmed the divine nature of the Word when he writes: "In the

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

The fact that the Word of God *is* God led to the astonishing nature of the event recorded in

John 1:14 – "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,

glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

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[1] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 109.

In the incarnation of God's Word we observe the perfect communication of God's love for his creation. The Word which created all things took on a form within creation, the form of humanity, in order to express God in a personal way to humanity. The incarnation serves as a supreme example of God's desire to communicate himself to the world He created.

God's Communication Today Through Ambassadors

This Word, Jesus, lived approximately thirty three years, communicating God's message of salvation to Israel in ancient Palestine. Then, in a powerful expression of divine love (Cf. John 15:13), Jesus laid down his life as a sacrifice for sin.

As in the incarnation, the death of Jesus serves as a prototype of God's communication: compassionate, other-centered, loving self-expression which focuses on those with whom he's communicating.

God still communicates today. Before his death, Jesus expressed his design for the continued self-expression of God. In addition to the words of God preserved in the Old and New Testaments, the future communication of God – his character, purposes, and message of salvation – would largely occur through the body of Christ, his Church. Upon departure from earth, Jesus' followers would be tasked with the responsibility of communicating God to other people.

In his high priestly prayer Jesus evinced how he had prepared his followers for this awesome task of revealing God to the world:

> I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may

become perfectly one, *so that the world may know* that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.[2]

In this prayer Jesus displayed his concern for the world to know who he is and why he was sent. He foreshadowed how this self-expression of God will not happen through his human agency any longer; it would soon occur through his disciples by their unity with each other and with God. This prayer reveals God's design for utilizing people in his self-expression to the world. The body of Christ would now express God with the same compassion, other-centeredness, and love that Jesus, God's Word, modeled.

In the same vein, the Apostle Paul described a Christian's role in communicating for God using ambassador-language:

> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.[3]

Paul's phrase, "All this is from God," affirms that the work of making someone a new creation is *God's* work. Reconciliation to God is a work that only God can accomplish. People are the beneficiaries of this salvific work, not the performers. Yet, as beneficiaries, these "new creations" receive a vital responsibility in God's gospel. God called the apostles to speak as envoys.

The apostles are the primary agents in mind in this passage; Paul was primarily referring to himself and the other leaders who God had sent to establish the early church. Witherington commented, "Paul uses the formal language of envoy or ambassador (vs. 20), implicitly making clear his authority. He is not the envoy of a king, but of God, at least in

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[2] John 17.20-23 ESV (English Standard Version)

[3] II Corinthians 5:17-20 ESV

respect to 'the world' and his ministry he has the endorsement and authority of God."[4]   Yet, clearly Paul's ecclesiology included the idea that all authentic followers of Jesus receive the ministry of reconciliation; Paul's apologetic for sending missionaries in Romans 10:9-17 reveals his expectation that the entire church must communicate the euangelion, good news, to the world. All disciples receive the "ministry of reconciliation" from Jesus, not simply the apostles, upon reconciliation to God. All members of the body of Christ become "ambassadors for Christ," as Paul wrote, "God making His appeal through [them]."

When Paul expressed this plan for Christians to represent Jesus to the world, he merely restated the commission all disciples received from Jesus to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This directive from Jesus parallels II Corinthians 5:17-20; both passages reveal God's desire for his people to communicate, or represent him, to all geographic regions in the world.

To communicate as a πρεσβευμεν (ambassador) means to accurately represent another person; to express the intentions of a person, in that person's absence. This label as Paul applies it denotes authority and responsibility. When someone represents Jesus as an ambassador he/she carries the character and words of God. "[The] authority of the message rests on the fact that Christ himself speaks in the word of his ambassador – that God himself uses the apostle as a mouthpiece to utter his own admonition."[5]

Yet, serving as an ambassador involves more than repeating words; an ambassador presents the honor and character of the one they represent. Thus, the highest priority for an

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[4] Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth; A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 396.

[5] Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, ed., "πρεσβευω" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume VI (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 682.

ambassador is to accurately reflect the person they represent; represent with integrity the message, intent, and character of the one who sent them.

In the case of representing Jesus, Paul states that anyone "in Christ" becomes responsible for communicating the appeal of God to un-reconciled people; an appeal to turn from sin, return to the creator, and believe in God's Word, Jesus, in order that they might be saved (Cf. Romans 10:9).

Jesus' prayer for his followers, his commissioning of his disciples, and Paul's exhortation toward ambassadorship reveal that plan of God to communicate, or express himself to people. He intends to do much of his self-expression through the body of Christ, his church. People who have already been reconciled to God are commissioned with the task of representing God to those needing reconciliation. This commission to serve as an ambassador of Christ is a tremendous privilege and responsibility.

The Problem & Setting

Unfortunately, a tragic disconnect occurs today in Western civilization within the body of Christ, the church. While the local church and seminary is rightly working to advance the gospel by training and equipping people in the area of apologetics (the presentation of truth and arguments as a defense of the faith), the emphasis on words, arguments, and presentation of a Christian world-view, often leads the apologist to present the *precepts* of Christianity without representing the compassion and other-centered *person* of Jesus.

Ajith Fernando assessed, "One of the most common criticisms brought against Christians is that we are disrespectful and intolerant of other faiths and people in our

evangelism efforts."[6] Many of these claims leveled against Christians have arisen from ambassadors presenting truth, yet neglecting to present the character and personality of Jesus.

Several years ago I witnessed first hand the tragedy of an ambassador presenting Christ without embodying Jesus. In the spring of 1999, on a seminary campus, a zealous student of evangelical theology raced out of his dorm to confront a pair of Mormon missionaries. The young men from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had courageously entered the seminary campus seeking dialog, but instead received an assault of well-designed apologetic arguments.

Later that same day, this student of apologetics recounted this encounter by stating, "It was awesome! I *beat them up* with the truth. They didn't have anything to say to my arguments."

This young apologist's arsenal had a polished Kalam cosmological argument, a solid teleological argument, and an air-tight employment of the Granville-Sharp rule to support the argument that Jesus is both Lord *and* Savior. Yet, he failed to present what these young men most needed, the person Jesus.

This encounter probably sent those young missionaries away offended, and it likely encouraged deeper devotion to their Mormon faith. It certainly sent my colleague away proud of his apologetic prowess and eagerly awaiting another opportunity to conquer with the truth.

In this instance, this tragic error appeared to be a result of an *inner* disconnect; this student of apologetics seemingly knew the words of God without having internalized the Word of God. This student lacked the same heart for the lost that Jesus displayed; a person

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[6] Ajith Fernando, *Sharing the Truth in Love; How to Relate to People of Other Faiths* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 2001), 41.

who has been reconciled to God will not delight in "beating others up" with Jesus' words. In this instance the tragedy appeared to spring from an inner void of compassion and other-centeredness.

Yet, often the error of presenting the truths of Christ without embodying Jesus is committed by well-meaning people; people who do love Jesus and the people with whom they are witnessing. In these instances the outer disconnect is not a result of an unloving heart, but rather a misguided understanding of the role an apologist plays in evangelism.

I was with a friend, Tom, when an opportunity arose for him to represent Jesus to a person needing to be reconciled to God. Tom and I were exercising when we crossed paths with Paul, an old friend from Tom's high school. After introductions, Paul surprised us both by how quickly he introduced the topic of his recent divorce from his high school sweetheart. Paul was obviously in great emotional pain from the recent separation and suspected Tom would be someone who would listen.

Tom did listen, but quickly interjected. He accurately sensed in Paul's empty sadness an inroad for the gospel and hastily took it. Before Paul finished explaining his feelings, Tom interjected the question, "Paul, there's a relationship even more important than the one with our wives; have you ever thought about your relationship with God?"

You could have knocked Paul over with a feather. The free flow of speech which first came from Paul ceased. By the offended look on his face, it was obvious that Paul felt he had not been heard, or respected. Paul quickly replied, "I'm fine with God, Tom. Listen, I'm running late. I'd better hit the shower."

Paul shook our hands and walked into the locker room. As Tom and I resumed our workout he said, "Boy, Paul sure didn't want to talk about spiritual things, did he? Let's pray for him when we leave the gym."

In contrast to my colleague at seminary, Tom sincerely desired that Paul find the new life he, himself, had found through Jesus. Tom loves Jesus and earnestly intended to honor him and love Paul in his bold communication of the gospel. Yet, Tom's approach offended Paul and prevented Tom from reaching a point where truth could be communicated. As often happens in these failed encounters, Tom mistook Paul's offense as stemming from conviction given from the Spirit of God.

Tom's problem was not a failure to internalize the Word of God for himself, to share Jesus' desire to communicate salvation with compassion, other-centeredness, and love. Tom's mistake was that he had an incomplete vision and strategy regarding representing the person of Jesus.

Apologetics is a valuable area of study within Christendom, yet with a strong emphasis on presentation of truth, ambassadors for Christ often present Christ without embodying Jesus. Presenting truth and words is vital but not the entirety of our mission. When conveying truth and words is our terminal goal, we run the risk of failing to accurately represent Jesus to those with whom we're communicating. We fail to accurately present the Christian faith. As John Stackhouse Jr. states:

> Christianity, however, is much more than a set of propositions to which one might or might not grant intellectual assent. It is, at its heart, a path to life, a following of Jesus Christ as disciples and as members of the worldwide church. If apologetics consists entirely of words and truths, therefore, it will literally fail to communicate Christianity, but instead necessarily distort it by shrinking it to what words and truths can portray.[7]

Presenting the truth of Christ without representing the entire person of Jesus, his compassion, other-centeredness and love, produces particularly negative results in the

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[7] John G. Stackhouse, *Humble Apologetics; Defending the Faith Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131.

Western culture which over-values religious tolerance. One of the distinctive assumptions of

Western, secular civilization in the twenty-first century is that religious truth is relative.

A Barna poll entitled "Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings,"[8]

surveyed people after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, and found that only 32

percent of born-again Christian adults believe that ethics and morality are not relative. 68

percent of born-again Christian adults believe that truth, even religious truth, is relative. The

same poll found that only 9 percent of born-again Christian teenagers held the view that

ethics are not relative.

This relativism has spawned one of the highest values of our day, tolerance. If truth

is relative, it naturally follows that we must accept and tolerate other religious beliefs as

equally viable and contributive. Western society's value of tolerance is an essential

component to the Postmodernist worldview.

"Postmodern" as a label primarily refers to an era, rather than an ideology, or a

world-view.[9] "Postmodern" designates the time period following the "modern" era.

Postmodern*ism*, however, is a particular system, or ideology, characterized by the belief that

there are no moral or religious absolutes. Truth, being relative, isn't to be pursued, found,

and held dogmatically; it is to be deconstructed, then reconstructed, then deconstructed once

again.[10]

It necessarily follows that the postmodernist is skeptical of truth claims, which leaves

Christian ambassadors with a unique challenge. The postmodernist will be inclined to reject

a person presenting the truths of Christianity simply on the ground that the gospel makes

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8 See "Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings," web site: www.barna.com, February 12, 2002, referenced by Scott Smith, *Truth & New Kind of Christian* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 13.

9 Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times; A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994), 19.

10 Ibid., 19.

definitive, dogmatic claims. The ethos of an ambassador of Christ will begin in a poor light in the opinion of the postmodernist who sees Christians as intolerant of other religious systems and adherents.

The reason that the Western, postmodernist culture accentuates and heightens the problem of presenting Christ *without* accurately representing Jesus' compassion, other-centeredness, and love is that truth apart from relationship is intrinsically suspect to a secular, postmodernist living in Western civilization today.

An ambassador for Christ potentially could have presented truth claims more easily in the modern era; the era defined by deductive, process-oriented, linear thinking. An ambassador of Christ in the modern era could present the gospel with a strong emphasis on receiving and accepting truth; whereas in the postmodern era, the era in which religious tolerance is highly valued, a simple presentation of truth claims often produces skepticism, even revulsion. While presenting Christ through impersonal channels such as tracts, formulas, and charts may have been effective during the modern era, they hold little promise for making God's appeal today.

The Western, secular person valuing religious tolerance must be convinced that there is genuine compassion and respect coming from the presenter of truth in order to earn a hearing. When a follower of Christ seeks to embody Jesus by representing Jesus' compassion, other-centeredness, and sincere love for the receiver it naturally resonates with the postmodernist's penchant for experiential and relational reception of information.

Research Question

The truth and words of our message may offend, but as people seeking to embody Jesus by expressing the compassion, other-centeredness and love of God, our rhetoric must

not. When Jesus encountered a spiritually seeking person, he not only communicated truth, He displayed genuine understanding and compassion.[11] Likewise, the New Testament instructs an ambassador of Christ to maintain a gentle, respectful (I Peter 3:16), loving, faithful, pure (I Timothy 4:12), self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, (I Timothy 3:2), upright, holy, and disciplined (Titus 1:8) lifestyle when representing Jesus.

These adjectives necessitate that an ambassador of Christ present, not only the words of Jesus, but the entire rhetorical approach of Jesus. Jesus was intentional with his strategy to express and communicate for God. He listened well. He asked good questions. He employed great forethought and skill in displaying God's compassion, other-centeredness and love toward those he encountered.

Very few people model Jesus' rhetorical strategy by balancing the presentation of truth with the presentation of the attitudes and actions of Jesus. The few who do serve as valuable examples of embodying Jesus.

In light of the theological framework established, and in view of the postmodern milieu, this thesis will explore the following issue: What rhetorical principles can be derived from evaluating three exemplar apologists and who represent Jesus' compassion and other-centeredness, along with his truth, to secular, postmodern audiences valuing religious tolerance?

Thesis

My thesis is that a person seeking to embody Jesus by displaying genuine compassion and other-centeredness through his rhetorical skills and strategies will experience success in making disciples in our postmodern, secular society which values religious tolerance.

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[11] Cf. Samaritan woman (John 4:1-45); paralytic man (Luke 5:17-26); Sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50).

Overview & Project Design

The first section of this thesis involves a review of the major works relating to communicating the truths of Christ with compassion and other-centeredness. I trace the analytical development of thought on the nature of apologetics through the major works on this subject. In addition to the nature of apologetics, I explore Kenneth Burke's theory of identification[12] and Wayne Booth's theory of listening rhetoric[13] for rhetorical skills and strategies toward focusing on the receiver. Burke's and Booth's theories provide valuable insights into showing consideration toward the people with whom we dialog.

The second component of this thesis is the research project. To determine skills and strategies toward embodying Jesus to a secular audience valuing religious tolerance I investigate three exemplars of communication. From my survey of relevant literature I develop a list of potential rhetorical skills and strategies to attempt to identify in the exemplars rhetorical approach. For example, I developed an assessment which assisted me in identifying rhetorical skills and strategies arising from Burke's and Booth's theories.

This section devotes one chapter to each of the three exemplars to determine what rhetorical principles can be derived from their rhetorical approach for embodying Jesus to the secular mind in a day of tolerance. Audio and video presentations of each exemplar was evaluated to discover the exemplar's rhetorical skills and strategy in communicating Jesus.

The three exemplars of communication selected for this investigation are Dr. William Lane Craig, Dr. Ravi Zacharias, Greg Koukl. These three Christian apologists and

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[12] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1969).

[13] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric; The Quest for Effective Communication* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004).

communicators were selected for this study based on their outstanding experience, skill and success in speaking to secular audiences valuing religious tolerance.

The first exemplar, Dr. William Lane Craig is a Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, and a visiting Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College. He has authored numerous books and articles on various world-views, and is a leading apologist on the issue of secular humanism and tolerance.

The second exemplar, Greg Koukl is the Founder and President of the apologetics organization, Stand to Reason.[14] He holds a Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics from Talbot School of Theology, and a Masters in Christian Apologetics from Simon Greenleaf University. In addition to his leadership at Stand to Reason, Koukl is an adjunct professor in Christian Apologetics at Biola University.

Dr. Ravi Zacharias is currently a Visiting Professor at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University in Oxford, England. In addition to this position, Dr. Zacharias addresses secular audiences around the world on issues relating to secular humanism, religious pluralism, and various world-views. Dr. Zacharias is one of evangelical Christianity's leading representatives in the area of apologetics to people of the secular mind.

I evaluated these three exemplars using a minimum of three resources on each; materials (ie. audio, video, transcripts) from debates, speeches, or conferences in which these exemplars addressed a secular audience valuing religious tolerance. I contacted each of the Christian apologists and communicators directly, or their agency, and requested materials which best fit the research.

In addition to the skills and strategies gathered from relevant literature, I carefully detailed any additional rhetorical skills and strategies observed from my examination of each

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[14] Cf. website: www.STR.org

exemplar. These three men excel in how they personalize their communication and I gleaned rhetorical principles not yet described in literature from my observations.

The final section of this thesis summarizes the findings of the research project and provides practical suggestions and suggested outcomes. From my interaction with these transcripts and audio/video recordings I summarized the rhetorical skills and strategies each exemplar employs.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To establish a research framework for this project I have surveyed the major works relating to four aspects of communicating the gospel through embodying Jesus: the nature of apologetics, Kenneth Burke's theory of identification, Wayne Booth's theory of listening rhetoric, and persuasion.

The Nature of Apologetics

Regarding the nature of Christian apologetics, two issues are germane to this study: first, the stated goals, or purposes, of apologetics, and secondly, the five primary approaches to doing apologetics (presenting biblical truth to secular world-views).

In regard to the purposes of apologetics, Steven B. Cowan suggests two primary categories: apologetics serves to "bolster the faith of Christian believers and aid in the task of evangelism."[15] Cowan suggests that an apologist strives to accomplish these two goals by either "refuting objections to the Christian faith," or by "offering positive reasons for Christian faith."[16] The former is considered "negative" apologetics and the latter is labeled "positive" apologetics.

David Clark expands this view of apologetics as a means to accomplishing Cowan's goals by positing a third goal of apologetics: to simply engage in beneficial dialog. Clark suggests that an apologetic appeal should not merely attempt to bolster faith or win

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[15] Stanley N. Gundry and Steven B. Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 8.

[16] Ibid., 8.

converts, apologists must seek to engage in "honest dialog and genuine relationships – for their own sakes."[17] Clark calls his method of relationship building apologetics "dialogic apologetics." *Dialogic Apologetics* makes a valuable contribution by stressing the importance of respecting those with whom were speaking.

John Stackhouse makes an important distinction regarding the purposes, or goals, of apologetics when he suggested that "apologetics itself must extend beyond the merely intellectual."[18] Stackhouse's primary assertion was that apologetics must strive to do more than simply argue truth and make converts, it must seek to move people in the direction of taking Christianity more seriously. Stackhouse describes how the process of conversion is just that, a process. Apologetics must seek to help people advance in their process of accepting Christ, not merely seek to gain instant conversion. In this regard, Stackhouse presents a similar idea to Clark, but places greater emphasis on the idea of "advancing" the person who receives our rhetorical presentation.

Perhaps the clearest and simplest statement regarding the purpose of apologetics can be found in James Sire's book on successful arguments for Christ. Sire states, "Our job, then, is to be the best witnesses to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord as we can be."[19] The purpose of doing apologetics is to be the most faithful ambassador for Jesus that we can be. Sire's statement about being the best witness we can be encapsulates many of the purposes and goals described by the previously referenced authors.

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[17] David K. Clark, *Dialogic Apologetics; A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 102-103.

[18] John G. Stackhouse, *Humble Apologetics; Defending the Faith Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 115.

[19] James W. Sire, *Why Good Arguments Often Fail* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 17.

Regarding the five primary approaches to doing apologetics, or presenting biblical truth to secular world-views, Gundry and Cowan's work, *Five View on Apologetics*, provides the most concise summary. Gundry and Cowan list the five approaches to communicating and defending the truth as "Classical apologetics," "Evidential apologetics," "Cumulative case apologetics," "Presuppositional apologetics," and "Reformed epistemology apologetics."[20] The following paragraphs briefly describe each method. Following a discussion of these five methods I surveyed popular works which deal with secondary issues concerning doing apologetics.

Classical apologetics is the approach to doing apologetics which "begins by employing natural theology to establish theism as the correct world-view."[21] Once a theistic world-view is proven through argument, a classical apologist will employ "historical evidences" for the "deity of Christ." Classical apologetics relies heavily on reason, or rationality. William Lane Craig defends classical apologetics by stating "that reason in the form of rational arguments and evidence plays an essential role in showing Christianity to be true, whereas reason in this form plays a contingent and secondary role in our personally knowing Christianity to be true."[22] Classical apologetics presupposes that before evidence for the historicity of God can be discussed and accepted, one must hold a theistic, supernatural, world-view. Without this world-view, evidence for the faith will not convince people.

Evidential apologetics is the approach to doing apologetics which "tends to focus chiefly on the legitimacy of accumulating various historical and other inductive arguments

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[20] Gundry and Cowan.

[21] Ibid., 15.

[22] William Lane Craig, *Classical Apologetics in Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 28.

for the truth of Christianity."[23] Evidential apologetics has a very similar approach to classical apologetics. The primary distinction appears to be that evidential apologetics stresses the philosophical and historical evidences to form a case for Christ. "Miracles do not presuppose God's existence (as most contemporary classical apologists assert) but can serve as one sort of evidence for God."[24]

Cumulative Case apologetics attempts to achieve the stated goals of apologetics by piecing "together several lines or types of data into a sort of hypothesis or theory that comprehensively explains that data and does so better than any alternative hypothesis."[25] Rather than suggesting that a well-formed apologetic argument can prove beyond doubt the truth of Christianity, cumulative apologetics suggests that the strength of the presentation, based on both the quantity and quality of argumentation, should lead a person toward conversion. Gundry and Cowan suggest that this approach to defending the faith is similar to how a lawyer prepares a brief; it presents an explanation that should account for the data better than any other explanation.

Presuppositional apologetics begins with the opinion that a non-Christian and a Christian do not hold enough beliefs in common for the apologist to engage in "Classical," "Evidential," or "Cumulative case" apologetics. Presuppositional apologetics, in contrast to these first three, "must simply presuppose the truth of Christianity as the proper starting point in apologetics."[26] A presuppositional apologist will begin by seeking to demonstrate that unbelievers necessarily presuppose God. Once they find that presupposition with their

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[23] Gundry and Cowan, 16.

[24] Ibid., 16.

[25] Ibid., 18.

[26] Ibid., 18-19.

audience, then they can begin to fill out the details of a Christian world-view to their audience which has already acknowledged the existence of God. Obviously, presuppositional apologists spend much of their energy proving to non-Christians that they (non-Christian) have certain presuppositions in agreement with Christians.

The final approach, the Reformed Epistemology Apologetic Method, challenges the "Evidential" apologist's belief that it is irrational to believe what lacks evidence. The Reformed Epistemology method for doing apologetics "hold[s] that it is perfectly reasonable for a person to believe many things without evidence."[27] Many apologists practicing this method agree with Calvin's opinion that people are born with an "innate *sensus divinitatis* (sense of the divine)."[28] They would hold that if people have this innate sense of the divine, then evidence is not necessarily a priority for belief.

In addition to the five methods of apologetics, several books written on a popular level, have contributed to the manner in which a Christian should practice apologetics. Below are a few of the main contributions.

Two of the main works addressing the inner motives and attitudes of the apologist are *Dialogic Apologetics*, by David Clark, and *Humble Apologetics*, by John Stackhouse. Clark and Stackhouse do not present a model for doing apologetics which competes with the five previously described, but rather emphasize strategies and approaches to communication which could be employed within any of the five primary categories.

In his book, *Dialogic Apologetics*[29], David Clark presents a case for doing apologetics as a dialog. Clark addresses the formal methods for apologetics and criticizes them for

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[27] Ibid., 19.

[28] Ibid., 20.

[29] Stackhouse, 102-103.

focusing too much on results. Dialogic Apologetics, in contrast to the four approaches (he

leaves out the Reformed Epistemology Method), "means renouncing a fixation with mere

results. It is instead a service-oriented apologetic, an others-focused method, that recognizes

other values – honest dialog and genuine relationship – for their own sakes."[30]

Clark rightly admits that his dialogic method is not a model on par with the other

five methods, but rather a "second class or category of views."[31] Clark presents the idea of

dialogic apologetics in order to suggest that Christians focus less on theory, or content, and

more on the person we dialog with. For this reason, Clark's contribution is valuable and his

dialogic method can, and likely should, be employed by all of the other five methods.

In Stackhouse's *Humble Apologetics* we find a similar contribution to Clark's; "humble

apologetics" as a method is not an addition to the five primary approaches, so much as it is a

nuance. Much like Clark, Stackhouse emphasizes that any approach to apologetics must be

listener focused. He suggested that an apologist must deal with two primary questions

before making an appeal for the faith. "How open is our neighbor to the gospel, and to

what kind of apologetics is she most open?"[32] His primary thesis is that an apologetic

method recognizes that Jesus requires the body of Christ to present more than propositional

truth; Christians must present a "heart, a path of life, a following of Jesus Christ as disciples

and as members of the world-wide Church."[33]

Stackhouse's book ventures beyond Clark's in providing suggestions on doing

apologetics. He emphasizes presenting the morality of Jesus, stressing the idea of grace and

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[30] David K. Clark, *Dialogic Apologetics; A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 102-103.

[31] Ibid., 109.

[32] Ibid., 145.

[33] Ibid., 131.

truth as a means of personally relating to God, and doing apologetics as an "act of love toward God," and "toward our neighbor." Overall, Stackhouse makes a solid contribution to the method of doing apologetics by urging Christians to focus on the audience in the same way that Jesus did, no matter which of the five primary methods of doing apologetics the Christian might employ.

In addition to Clark and Stackhouse, many other authors have made similar contributions to the attitudes and motivations of the apologist. For example, in 1995, Michael Green and Alister McGrath published *How Shall We Reach Them?*[34] Green and McGrath advocate carefully considering where our listeners are in their spiritual journeys. They emphasize the idea of listening to our listeners, much like Booth's Listening-Rhetoric, which I will describe below. Booth describes the idea with greater detail and emphasized the importance of a willingness to be changed by out listening, but Green and McGrath provide, on a popular level, the idea of focusing on our audience through listening.

Likewise, Graham Johnson added to the discussion in 2004 with his book *Preaching to a Postmodern World.* Thus he tries to make our apologetic approach more relational. Johnson assesses that "an inherent strength in postmodern times is the belief that every person's perception is valid. With this belief comes an openness to explore and investigate the worldviews of others."[35]

A similar contribution is made by David Day in *Preaching with All You've Got.* Day touches on the idea of "embodying Jesus" though our rhetorical strategy. He uses that term to describe using creative actions and illustrations during our presentation of Christian truths

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[34] Michael Green and Alister McGrath, *How Shall We Reach Them?; Defending and Commending the Christian Faith To Nonbelievers* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

[35] Graham Johnson, *Preaching to a Postmodern World; A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 77-78.

in order to engage the five senses. His theory is that if a person adds movement, energy, and personal illustration to a presentation, because of a genuine experience of the Spirit in the presenter, the listener will be more apt to experience the message, not simply hear it. "Something of that renewed person will be caught and sensed by those with whom I speak."[36]

While Day writes of "embodying" the Word, he primarily refers to internalizing the Words of God in such a way that they produce life and energy in the message we present. While this is a vital contribution to the discussion on how to present the truths of Christ, it is not the same idea this thesis will explore under the same image of "embodying Jesus." Day's contribution focuses more on the experience of the presenter that will, according to Day, inadvertently impact the listener. My theory of embodying Jesus focuses more on the rhetorical skills and strategies which enable a person to display Jesus' compassion, other-centeredness, and concern toward the listener.

In his book written to a popular audience, Paul Chamberlain discusses how to present difficult truths to non-Christians "without getting ugly."[37] Chamberlain provides a good discussion on the difference today between valuing truth and valuing tolerance. The two values cannot co-exist, and our postmodern, secular culture in the West is choosing to embrace tolerance as a supreme value. In addition to this discussion, Chamberlain makes a contribution to this discussion by suggesting that "humor" can be a tremendous skill and strategy toward winning an audience with the non-Christian. In examining William Wilberforce's employment of humor, Chamberlain suggests "humor is to be cherished, no

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[36] David Day, *Preaching With All You've Got; Embodying the Word of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2005), 18.

[37] Paul Chamberlain, *Talking About Good and Bad Without Getting Ugly; A Guide to Moral Persuasion* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

matter how serious the work one is involved in. Laughter has been called the best medicine."[38] Chamberlain makes an excellent point suggesting that humor is a vital key to connecting with our audience as we present difficult truths.

Finally, the contribution made by Terry D. Cooper in his book, *Making Judgments Without Being Judgmental*, is helpful in how it addresses an apologist's tendency to act morally superior. One of the most common criticisms leveled against ambassadors for Christ today is that they appear judgmental. The listener who feels judged will not often remain open to dialog. Because of this reality, Cooper's idea regarding how to present truth of a difficult nature without appearing to be judging the receiver is valuable.

Cooper suggests that the presenter of Christ must examine his heart to see if he is indeed holding judgmental thoughts. "When we think we have completely eliminated judgmentalism from our thinking, we probably need to take another look."[39] Having a judgmental heart is the first problem the presenter of Christ must address. However, Cooper moves beyond the heart and suggests skills and strategies for not appearing judgmental. He does this by drawing several vital distinctions; such as critical thinking verses thinking critically, presenting truth that leads to feelings of guilt verses feelings of shame, or how to be humble about ourselves yet confident about the truth. These distinctions are valuable in the Christian's presentation of the gospel from the right inner attitudes and motivations.

These are a few of the popular works on apologetics which address attitudes and motivations necessary in presenting a case for Christ in a winsome, respectful manner.

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[38] Ibid., 116.

[39] Terry D. Cooper, *Making Judgments Without Being Judgmental; Nurturing a Clear Mind and a Generous Heart* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 15-16.

Kenneth Burke and the Theory of Identification

Kenneth Burke makes a tremendous contribution to the field of rhetorical studies with his theory of identification described most thoroughly in *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Burke posits that "you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his."[40] Burke supports his theory of identification on Aristotle's quote from Socrates, "It is not hard to praise Athenians among Athenians."[41] Aristotle's point, which Burke builds on with his identification theory, is that it is vital to find unity with our audience in every aspect of our rhetoric, if we hope to succeed in our presentation.

As Burke explained his theory, he presents several helpful statements on identifying with our audience. According to Burke, an audience, or person, should feel as if they are *participating in a dialog*, not merely *receiving* a presentation. Burke writes: "Could we not say that, in such cases, the audience is exalted by the assertion because it has the feel of collaborating in the assertion? At least, we know that many purely formal patterns can readily awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us."[42]

With these statements Burke makes the point that an audience will be more inclined to not only agree, but also to persuade themselves to own the idea, if they feel they've participated in the creation of the idea. This is one way an apologist prompts identification. Self-persuasion is the only true persuasion, and Burke's theory of identification posits that self-persuasion is more likely to occur when the apologist works hard and well at collaborating with his audience in all aspects of his rhetorical appeal.

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[40] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1969), 55.

[41] Ibid., 55.

[42] Ibid., 58.

Many scholars and rhetoricians have examined Burke and commented on his theory. William Rueckert identifies the core belief behind not only Burke's theory of identification, but all his work in rhetoric and communication. Ruecker posits that Burke viewed each person as being "in search of himself and a way toward a better life."[43] Ruecker suggests that Burke saw this as the "universal situation," which became the driving force for Burke's writings in the area of rhetoric. Rhetoric for Burke, according to Ruecker, is a way to help others grow and develop their selves.

This contribution by Ruecker is important to note because it helps clarify Burke's theory of identification. According to Ruecker Burke believes that people, in general, are not that different from one another. All people have similar patterns by which they seek to gain truth and change in positive ways. Ruecker explaining Burke's basis for rhetoric, writes: "The self identifies with one thing or another, consciously or unconsciously; it accepts and rejects various alternatives, merges with and separates from certain things; its growth is the drama of ethical choice and its ideal is that unity of being which constitutes the determined and forward-moving self."[44]

According to Ruecker, Burke viewed the pattern of experience within the "forward-moving self" as very similar from one person to the next. This belief contributes to Burke's formation of identification as a theory of communication. Identification becomes a way for the rhetor to find commonality in the universality of the advancement of self; a universal condition which varies very little from person to person. For example, when a speaker takes a posture of a learner, someone who is on a journey to grow and change, most people in his

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[43] Willaim H. Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke And The Drama of Human Relations* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1982), 43.

[44] Ibid., 43.

audience will identify with that journey. When people identify with the speaker in this manner, they prepare to internalize his message and make needed changes to their own paradigm.

In *The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication* George Cheney examines Burke's theory of identification and applied it to organizational management. This article is germane to this thesis because Cheney identifies two specific ways in which Burke's identification can be employed. First, Cheney discusses "identification by antithesis," in which a rhetor seeks collaboration with his audience by identifying an "enemy" that both the speaker and the listener hold in common. Secondly, Cheney extracts from Burke's theory the idea of using an "assumed we" during a presentation; meaning, the speaker employs pronouns like "we" or "us" in ways that likely pass unnoticed, yet have the rhetorical effect of joining the listener with the speaker.[45]

Wayne Booth and the Theory of Listening-Rhetoric

Wayne Booth also studied Burke and makes a valuable contribution to the theory of identification in his *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric.*

Similar to Burke, Booth is concerned with the ethical treatment of an audience through a rhetorical appeal. In his chapter entitled "Judging Rhetoric," he raises a vital question regarding the complexities of rhetoric: "Is the apologist attempting to achieve an end she believes will be harmful to her listeners, or one she honestly believes will prove beneficial?"[46] Booth suggests that "*skillful* rhetoric works either way, often with tragic

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[45] George Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 69 (1983): 143-158.

[46] Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric; The Quest for Effective Communication* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 43.

consequences that have given rhetoric such a bad name."[47] This statement recalls the experience the young apologist and the Mormon missionaries explained in the first chapter.

In *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric*, Booth delineates between three "kinds of rhetoric;" these three categories appeared to address the attitude and motivations of the apologist toward his audience. The first kind of rhetoric Booth described is "Win-Rhetoric." According to Booth, this is the type of rhetoric the Greeks labeled "eristic," or the intent to win at any cost to the listener. "As in war, victory is essential, regardless of what must be sacrificed."[48]

"Win-Rhetoric" is often times the rhetoric behind the five approaches to doing apologetics, stressing the idea of winning a debate or discussion. Many authors, such as Day, Chamberlain and Cooper offer correctives to Win-Rhetoric with their books on contending for the faith while remaining other-centered and respectful.

The second kind of rhetoric is "Bargain-Rhetoric." This is the attitude, or motivation, to "pursue diplomacy, mediate, find a truce"[49] with the listener. This rhetoric is not morally commendable, or reprehensible; it can be employed with good arguments toward a beneficial end, or it can be employed with poor arguments toward a dishonorable end.

The third kind of rhetoric is the kind that Booth advocates and suggests is most similar to Burke's theory of identification, "Listening-Rhetoric." Booth goes so far as to describe his category of Listening-Rhetoric as a "synonym for Burke's identification"[50]

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 45.

[50] Ibid., 75.

theory. While there are many parallels, Booth advances Burke's thinking in two important

ways.

For example, in Booth's Listening-Rhetoric, "both sides are pursuing not just victory

but a new reality, a new agreement about what is real."[51] Booth's Listening-Rhetoric

emphasizes similar values to Burke's theory of identification (trust, mutuality, a

determination to listen and learn from one another, and placing a high, intrinsic value on the

exchange of ideas, not merely the winning of an argument), yet Booth places a greater

emphasis on the value of an rhetorical exchange so that both sides felt listened to, valued,

and respected. This idea is certainly a component to Burke's theory, yet receives clearer

emphasis in Booth's theory.

Perhaps the key contribution of Booth's Listening-Rhetoric concerns the apologist's

willingness to be changed:

> No rhetorical effort can succeed if it fails to join in the beliefs and passions
> of the audience addressed, and that almost always requires some
> "accommodation," "adjustment," or "adaptation" to the audience's needs
> and expectations. Listening will be useless unless you let it change your
> rhetoric.[52]

Booth suggests that we must do more than simply hear what our partner in dialog is

saying; we must work to allow what they are saying to *change us*, have some impact on us.

The idea that a Christian apologist must be willing to change during a dialog with a

non-Christian presents an interesting question: How much and in what ways should we be

willing to change?

Booth's Listening-Rhetoric, while it plays a vital role in my theory of embodying

Jesus, must be nuanced. There are certain truths and convictions held by the Christian

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[51] Ibid., 47.

[52] Ibid., 51.

apologist that are not open for revision or change. These are the essential doctrines of the faith, such as salvation by faith alone in Jesus. While we are on a journey toward growth, change and personal improvement, once we investigate questions and find the best answers, we must feel free to hold those answers with deep resolve.

It is not disingenuous to present openness toward personal change during dialog with non-Christians, yet hold certain convictions as non-negotiable. In this regard, Booth's premise that we must adjust or adapt, we must acknowledge that this theory is limited to areas that we feel are truly open to interaction and challenge. This will likely differ for each rhetor, but it is important to note that there is a limitation to Booth's theory for the Christian apologist.

That being said, Burke's theory of identification and Booth's theory of Listening-Rhetoric make vital contributions to the discussion of apologetics by emphasizing the importance of connecting with one's audience. The five approaches to doing apologetics present methods to presenting truth, yet focus primarily on the presentation and the truth. An apologetic strategy seeking to hone the method of presenting truth as a means to greater success falls short. A rhetor must consider his audience and strive to identify, listen, and connect with them in such a way that he can effectively guide them toward self-persuasion. Burke and Booth present valuable ideas toward the audience-centered aspect of our apologetic appeal.

Persuasion

In *A Psychology for Preaching*, Jackson sets out a plan for preaching in a way that is both authoritative and personal. Jackson has a deep pastoral concern for preachers' audiences. He writes, "People are for [the minister] not just so many bodies that fill the pews. They are

not empty vessels into which he pours his wisdom. They are living, struggling souls who come seeking a light."[53] This concern is evinced in Jackson's pragmatic suggestions on persuading toward spiritual growth and development.

Perhaps Jackson's clearest statement of persuasion for the good of the audience is: "But in order to be effective [the preacher] must be sensitive to the capacity for response on the part of his hearers, and at the same time he must be alert to the resources of his medium to stimulate thought and generate feelings that can lead to health of mind, body and spirit."[54] Jackson makes clear with this statement that preaching should cause positive change in our listener's minds and hearts. This is persuasion.

Jackson's primary thesis for persuasion is that a preacher should adopt the strategy employed by Jesus. According to Jackson, Jesus was "not afraid to be personal and declarative."[55] Jesus preached in a way that put the listeners in the message, yet kept them free to respond in their own desired way. "After hearing Jesus speak, men might still be free to say 'Yes' or 'No,' but they were certainly not free from themselves, for they could not help seeing the problem of life and their own relation to it."[56] This is Jackson's primary conclusion: the preacher must do the work necessary to place people in the message, making the moment dialogic, and then allow the individual or group to decide for themselves how they must respond. Persuasion, not coercion, is an important goal for the preacher.

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[53] Edgar N. Jackson, *A Psychology for Preaching* (Great Neck: Channel Press Inc., 1961), 67.

[54] Ibid., 114.

[55] Ibid., 162.

[56] Ibid., 167.

Henry Eggold builds on Jackson's work in *Preaching is Dialog*. Eggold's premise is that a sermon is "God addressing the individual and calling for a response."[57] According to Eggold, if a preacher is to help people respond, he must see the sermon as a dialog, rather than a monolog. This involves listening well, first, the preaching in such a way that it persuades people to change. "A preacher must not simply be concerned for truth, but truth for people. His goal in preaching must be persuasion."[58] Specifically, Eggold stresses the goal of preaching must be to persuade men toward faith. Eggold writes that when we do this, we "reflect God's goals"[59] for preaching.

While Eggold makes several suggestions about persuasion (ie. a preacher should preach on the law in order to create a need in the listener for the gospel) his primary suggestion is that "the preacher must live in both worlds,"[60] the ancient text and the present world. Eggold calls these two worlds: "the world of the Word" and "the world of man."[61] He stresses that to persuade men toward faith a preacher must effectively bridge these two worlds in their preaching. Eggold advances Jackson's thoughts on preaching toward persuasion by stressing the importance of abstracting from the ancient context a truth that fits perfectly into our modern context.

Donald Sunukjian provides a strong, clear case for how "every preacher intuitively acts as a persuader, that the Scriptures teach persuasion as the goal of preaching, and that God has sovereignly chosen to accomplish His purposes through the combination of human

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[57] Henry J. Eggold, *Preaching is Dialog; A Concise Introduction to Homiletics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 9.

[58] Ibid., 15.

[59] Ibid., 23.

[60] Ibid., 53.

[61] Ibid., 55.

skill and divine power."[62] Sunukjian is more overt than Jackson and Eggert in the supposition that a preachers always has the goal to persuade; "the very decision to stand and preach has at the heart a persuasive intent. It indicates a desire to cause growth, to produce a difference, to influence a change in either salvation or spiritual maturity."[63]

Sunukjian, much like Jackson, bases this premise on Scripture. Yet, whereas Jackson models his method after Jesus, Sunukjian focuses largely on the Apostle Paul, positing that "Paul's own preaching reveals a strong persuasive intent."[64] Sunukjian's makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of preaching as persuasion by affirming that the "preacher's intuitive inclination, therefore, is the apostle's pattern." The preacher's desire to persuade has biblical support, according to Sunukjian.

Sunukjian discusses a specific aspect of persuasion, the speaker's ethos, in *The Credibility of the Preacher*. Having justified the motive of persuasion in *The Preacher as Persuader*, Sunukjian now stresses the importance of the perceived (by audience) credibility of the speaker in the persuasive act. Specifically, he lays out two aspects of a preacher's ethos which influence his persuasive ability: competency and character. This article provides helpful suggestions toward raising one's ethos in order to increase effectiveness of persuasion.

Steven Kaminski suggests that the New Testament idea of kerygma, or proclamation of the gospel, is "best understood as a rhetorically strategic proclamation of the gospel that

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[62] Donald R. Sunukjian, "The Preacher as Persuader," *Walvoord: A Tribute* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1982), 290.

[63] Ibid., 291.

[64] Ibid., 296.

varied according to the particular rhetorical situation."[65] In regards to persuasion, Kaminski makes the important distinction that "because [kerygma] is so tied to audience assumptions, it is fundamentally enthymematic in character."[66]

In making this statement, Kaminski was promoting the idea that the core function of kerygma is rhetorical persuasion. Presenting the gospel is an activity that involves participation from both the preacher and the listener. As Kaminski writes, "The audience becomes part of the persuasive process. They effect their own persuasion. The speaker takes what they provide, applies it to the unknown, and uses the product to persuade."[67] Kaminski strengthens Sunukjian's idea that preaching is persuasion by grounding kerygma in the enthymeme. "The enthymeme, then, is the engine of persuasion, and we find it propelling the kerygma."[68]

In *Preaching Sermons that Connect*, Craig Loscalzo, interacts with Kenneth Burke's theory of Identification in order to present ideas for persuading audiences through identification, or becoming "one with [our] hearers."[69] Loscalzo agrees with Sunukjian that "preaching persuades hearers to act upon the revelation of God."[70]

Loscalzo's unique contribution lies in applying Kenneth Burke's theory of identification to the rhetorical act of preaching for persuasion. Loscalzo' suggests that, similar to how "Burke roots his theory of rhetoric in the notion that all language is symbolic

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[65] Steven Kaminski, "Tailor-Made Preaching: The Rhetorical Character of the Kerygma," (paper presented at the national convention of the Evangelical Theological Society, 1991).

[66] Ibid., 10.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 14.

[69] Craig A. Loscalzo, *Preaching Sermons that Connect; Effective Communication Through Identification* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 17.

[70] Ibid., 18.

action; that is, language uses symbols that do something." Loscalzo agrees with Burke that language is meant to effect change. He applies Burke's theory and concludes that "the preacher is keenly aware of the needs of his or her hearers, listening to their questions, concerns, hurts, needs, dreams and weaknesses, and strategically formulates a symbolic response. The preacher designs the sermon to evoke an action or a change of attitude in light of the biblical revelation."[71] *Preaching Sermons that Connect* concludes with several suggestions on how to identify with audiences for the benefit of persuasion.

In *With Ears to Hear*, Robin Meyers presents a key aspect to persuasion: self-persuasion. Meyers quotes Herbert Simmons who states the importance of self-persuasion clearly: "In a real sense, we do not persuade others at all; we only provide the stimulus with which they persuade themselves."[72]

Meyers' perspective on persuasion agrees with Jackson when she stresses that the listener must feel they are in the message and free to make their own choice. "As long as the listener is acting in an atmosphere of perceived choice (which distinguishes persuasion from coercion), the process is really best described as self-persuasion."[73] Her distinction between persuasion and coercion in that statement is also vital. Keeping the listener in a sense that they can choose how they respond must be the goal of our presentation.

Perhaps the greatest contribution Meyers makes to the topic of persuasion is to suggest that "what the people in the pews need is a model *self-persuader*."[74] She writes: "what

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[71] Ibid., 33.

[72] Robin R. Meyers, *With Ears to Hear; Preaching as Self-Persuasion* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1993), 6, quoting Herbert W. Simmons, "Persuasion and Attitude Change," in Speech Communication Behavior: Perspectives and Principles, ed. Larry L. Baker and Robert J. Kibler (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), 232.

[73] Robin R. Meyers, *With Ears to Hear; Preaching as Self-Persuasion* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1993), 12.

[74] Ibid., 6.

people have the right to expect is that there is something about traffic with the Gospel that causes change in the practitioner of the Gospel."[75] Meyer's point is "that change cannot help but find its way into speech, both in matters of form and content."[76] This is a tremendous book offering a number of insights into self-persuasion as the only way to persuade an audience.

Loscalzo's *Evangelistic Preaching that Connects* utilizes the ideas presented in *Preaching Sermons that Connect* and applies them to the specific context of evangelistic preaching. Loscalzo, much like Kaminski, grounds much of his basis for preaching for persuasion in the term kerygma. Yet, where Kaminski focuses on the enthymeme as the basis for the persuasive nature of kerygma, Loscalzo focuses on the kerygma always calling for a response, an offer of forgiveness. "Evangelistic preaching should be addressed to those who are foreigners to the province of God. It should make clear that the gospel – the kerygma – is an offer of faith."[77]

Loscalzo appears to have been influenced by Meyers' work. In the introduction he even borrows her phrase "ears to hear."[78] He also foreshadows in his introduction the idea that he plans to discuss "persuasion," when he wrote: "Finally, we discuss the persuasive elements of evangelistic preaching."[79] Yet, Loscalzo's contribution appears to be primarily in the area of evangelistic preaching (stressing the inductive method), rather than persuasion.

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[75] Ibid., 64.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Craig A. Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching that Connects; Guidance in Shaping Fresh & Appealing Sermons* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 47.

[78] Ibid., 13.

[79] Ibid.

Likewise, Loscalzo's book *Apologetic Preaching*, applies much of his theory of audience-centered preaching to the postmodern mindset. Loscalzo makes a good point, in line with Burke's theory of identification, when he writes, "By intentionally looking for places of connection between the gospel and the postmodern world – being careful not to demonize postmodernism – we will move our listeners by identifying with their life experiences."[80] Much like his book on evangelistic preaching, *Apologetic Preaching* speaks more directly to audience sensitivity than to persuasion.

Doug Pagitt's *Preaching Re-Imagined* presents several ideas regarding persuasion. His primary thesis is that "progressional dialog" is a superior way of preaching than "speaching." Pagitt defines "speaching" as "the style of preaching that's hardly distinguishable from a one-way speech."[81] Pagitt is concerned with the impersonal nature of "speaching." He writes, "[pastors] have become blind to the ways in which the act of speaching damages our people and creates a sense of powerlessness in them."[82] The alternative he offers, "progressional dialog," involves having the pastor stand up front and lead a dialog. The speaker influences the audience, the audience in turn influences the pastor, and on and on.

Pagitt's main justification for this method is that it stresses the priesthood of all believers. "A belief in the priesthood of all believers compels us to reconsider our ideas about speaching and pastoral authority."[83] Pagitt references I Peter 2:9[84] and uses the idea of

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[80] Craig A. Loscalzo, *Apologetic Preaching; Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 200), 77.

[81] Doug Pagitt, *Preaching Re-Imagined; The Role of the Sermon in Communities of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 11.

[82] Ibid., 22.

[83] Ibid., 152.

[84] I Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" ESV

the priesthood of all believers to suggest that all followers of Christ should participate in the sermon activity.

Regarding persuasion, Pagitt's desire for progressional dialog is that it changes people. He is anti-consumerism and feels that "speaching" encourages inactivity. "People have become used to churches supplying them with spiritual life assistance, where they sit as consumers." Several sections in *Preaching Re-Imagined* are devoted to ideas of how to encourage active participation in the preaching activity; i.e. how to use microphones so that they do not encourage one amplified voice becoming more powerful than others[85], how to listen well during your preaching as to encourage dialog[86], and using improvisation to create a sense that we're on a journey to learn. "Instead [improvisation] is the gift of one who is so well-trained and proficient that she can explore what lies beyond the practice and planned."[87]

Preaching Re-Imagined contributes to the topic of persuasion in looking at ways to encourage active participation. Pagitt's thesis fits well with Meyers' idea that self-persuasion is vital to the learning and change process. In *Preaching Re-Imagined*, Pagitt explores ideas to increase this self-persuasion through active participation.

Template

Based on this survey of the nature of apologetics, Kenneth Burke's theory of identification, and Wayne Booth's theory of Listening-Rhetoric, Appendix A presents a template by which to evaluate the three exemplar apologists. Kenneth Burke identification theory will serve as the primary tool of evaluation. Burke provides several insights and

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[85] Ibid., 214.

[86] Ibid., 216.

[87] Ibid., 184.

suggestions toward building collaboration with an audience; these suggestions will serve as the primary evaluation tools in examining skills and strategies.

Booth's strategy of "Listening-Rhetoric" provides additional criteria. Additional rhetorical skills and strategies drawn from biblical principles, as well as other works on apologetics, will also be employed in this template. This template enables consistent evaluation of the skills and strategies employed by the three exemplars in their representation of Christ as ambassadors.

The template categorizes five rhetorical skills or strategies: "Identification through Association," "Identification through Disassociation," Identification through Affirmation of Universals," "Listening-Rhetoric," and "Rhetorical Skill of Gentleness and Respect." The first three skills and strategies were developed based on Burke's theory of identification. These three skills and strategies help the apologist gain collaboration with their audience. The fourth category, "Listening-Rhetoric," was developed based on Booth's theory of Listening-Rhetoric. This skill enables the rhetor to communicate a sincere desire to listen and accommodate what his audience communicates. The final category, the "Rhetorical Skill of Gentleness and Respect," was developed based on observations of the exemplars during the study. This skill is based primarily on I Peter 3:15, which states, "but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."[88]

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[88] I Peter 3:15-16 ESV

Chapter 3

DR. WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

The first exemplar evaluated is Dr. William Lane Craig. As stated in the first chapter, Dr. Craig is a Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology and a visiting Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College. Dr. Craig represents the Christian Theist's perspective in numerous debates and speeches to secular audiences each year.

I evaluated two debates and a public radio broadcast involving Dr. Craig. The first debate was held at the University of Wisconsin in 1998. Dr. Craig debated Dr. Antony Flew, a visiting professor of philosophy at several schools in the United States, including New York University, the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Southern California. The topic for this debate was *Does God Exist*? The audience was comprised primarily of University of Wisconsin students and faculty.

The day after the University of Wisconsin debate Dr. Craig was interviewed by the University of Wisconsin's NPR station. The interviewer was Tom Clark, who posed questions from an agnostic perspective. This radio broadcast was aired to a primarily secular audience. This is the second event I evaluate.

The final debate evaluated was held between Dr. Craig and Dr. Hector Avalos, a professor in the Philosophy and Religious Studies program at Iowa State University. I was present for this debate on February 5, 2004. The audience consisted of Iowa State University students, faculty, and members of the Ames, Iowa community. The topic of this debate was *The Resurrection of Jesus: Fact or Fiction*? Dr. Craig defended the position that the resurrection is a historical fact, and Dr. Avalos defended the position that the resurrection is

a myth. There was a question-answer period following the debate in which Dr. Craig directly responded to questions from secular questioners.

These two debates and radio broadcast provide an excellent sample of the rhetorical skills and strategies Dr. Craig employs when addressing a secular audience. The following summary evaluates and describes these skills and strategies in order of highest occurrence.

This first chapter, *Dr. William Lane Craig*, defines the various rhetorical skills and strategies by first naming of the rhetorical device, then secondly by defining it, then thirdly by illustrating the skill and/or strategy with an example. The only device from the template not employed by Dr. Craig, which will be explained in the forth chapter (*Dr. Ravi Zacharias)*, is "Identification Through Disassociation." This rhetorical strategy will be explained and illustrated in the following chapter discussing exemplar, Dr. Zacharias.

The First Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Association

The first rhetorical strategy, "Identification through Association," involves a general three step process whereby the speaker "1) names or identifies someone or something according to specific values or qualities; 2) the speaker then associates with the someone or something named by expressing shared values or qualities; 3) the speaker achieves the end result of identifying with our audience or opponent, or reaching a state of being consubstantial with others."[89]

For example, a speaker seeking "Identification Through Association" might describe the beauty of a geographic location to an audience from that locale in order to express a shared value for that locale. In so far as the audience appreciates (shares) the expressed value and deem the speaker sincere, collaboration will be gained from such association.

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[89] Brooke Quigley, "'Identification' as a Key Term in Kenneth Burke's Rhetorical Theory," acjournal.com, 2007, http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol1/iss3/burke/quigley.html (accessed May 1, 2007).

Dr. Craig utilizes this three step process of "Identification Through Association" masterfully in all three venues. For example, Dr. Craig often quoted a secular philosopher or scientist in support of a point he was making. In doing this, Dr. Craig identified a person the secular members of his audience naturally identified with, associated with that person, and thus, achieved identification between himself and his secular audience. Kenneth Burke calls this the process of "gaining collaborative expectancy."[90]

For example, when Dr. Craig made the point that the Big Bang theory *necessarily* leads to the conclusion that the universe began from nothing, and thus, must have had a first cause, he quoted Fred Hoyle, British astronomer and atheist who said:

> Would you not say to yourself, 'Some super-calculating intellect must have designed the properties of the carbon atom, otherwise the chance of my finding such an atom through the blind forces of nature would be utterly minuscule.' Of course you would. A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super intellect has monkeyed with physics."[91]

Quoting an atheist astronomer helped the secular members of the audience who identify with Hoyle, identify with Dr. Craig. This fostered collaboration with the atheists/agnostics in his audience.

One skillful use of "Identification Through Association" occurred when Dr. Craig defended the idea that the earth could not have always existed; that it must have been created. To prove this point, he demonstrated that an actual infinite is an impossibility. This is an issue of mathematics, so Dr. Craig identified (named) and quoted German Mathematician David Hilbert, who stated: "The infinite is nowhere to be found in reality. It neither exists in nature, nor provides a legitimate basis for rational thought. ... The role that

[90] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1969), 58.

[91] Fred Hoyle, "The Universe: Past and Present Reflections," *Engineering and Science*, November, (1981), pgs. 8-12, quoted by William Lane Craig, *Does God Exist; William Lane Craig/Antony Flew Debate*, 93 min., RZIM, 1988, DVD.

remains for the infinite to play is solely that of an idea."[92] Referring to a mathematician on

the ludicrous nature of the idea that the earth is infinite in age enabled the audience, who

naturally trust a mathematician, to collaborate with Dr. Craig's point.

Another instance of Dr. Craig's employment of "Identification Through

Association" occurred in his debate against Dr. Hector Avalos on the historicity of the

resurrection. When Dr. Craig made the point that if there is no God, there would not be any

absolute moral values, he referenced renowned atheist and skeptic Friedrich Nietzsche, who

stated that the death of God means the destruction of all values and meaning in life.[93] This

reference to Nietzsche, then associating with him, prompted the secular audience to identify

with Craig's theistic orientation, in light of experienced moral values in the universe.

Dr. Craig even employed the identification strategy in defense of an attack by Dr.

Avalos, using *Dr. Avalos* as his subject of identification. When Dr. Avalos attacked the

historicity of the ancient biblical text as a means to attacking the reliability of the witnesses

to the resurrection, Dr. Craig quoted Dr. Avalos *against himself.* Dr. Avalos published a book

on ancient health care systems in which his primary text was the New Testament.[94] Dr.

Craig quoted from Avalos' work and drew the conclusion that if Avalos' criticism of the

reliability of the New Testament is correct, he would undermine his own research. In a twist

of irony, Dr. Craig identified a past work of Dr. Avalos, identified or associated himself with

it, then used that association to gain support from Dr. Avalos and his secular audience. This

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92 David Hilbert, "On the Infinite," in Philosophy of *Mathematics,* ed. with an Introduction by Paul Benacerraf and Hillary Putnam (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pgs. 139 -141, quoted by William Lane Craig, *Does God Exist; William Lane Craig/Antony Flew Debate,* 93 min., RZIM, 1988, DVD.

93 Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Gay Science," in *The Portable Nietzsche,* trans. and ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Viking, 1954), pg. 95, quoted by William Lane Craig, *The Resurrection of Jesus: Fact or Fiction; William Lane Craig/Hector Avalos Debate,* 83 min., Reasonable Faith Ministries, 2004, DVD.

94 Cf. Hector Avalos, *Health Care and the Rise of Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999).

strategy worked well; Dr. Avalos' silence on the matter in his following speech suggested his concession of Dr. Craig's point.

Dr. Craig's employment of the rhetorical skill "Identification Through Association" helped to persuade his audience to by identifying with them. Kenneth Burke made this point when he wrote: "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his."[95] Identification Through Association enables a speaker to gain collaboration with his audience by talking their language by associating with like goals and values.

The three step process of "Identification Through Association" was the unquestioningly the most frequent rhetorical strategy employed by Dr. Craig.

The Second Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Affirmation of Universals

To create "Identification Through Affirmation of Universals" a speaker will "locate, describe, and satisfy the permanent, fundamental needs of man."[96] With regards to the "permanent, fundamental needs of man," Rueckert is referring to the universal situation of all people; what is common to all people.

In seeking "Identification Through Affirmation of Universals," a speaker identifies or names a universal need or experience and then explicitly or implicitly places himself into the identified need or experience. If it is genuinely a universal need or experience, the audience will collaborate with the speaker.

An example of creating identification through affirming a universal need or experience would be a speaker stating, "All people seek meaning in life, we all want to

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[95] Burke, 55.

[96] William H. Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, 2nd ed. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1982), 41.

understand the purpose behind why we're here on this planet." Each member of the audience will resonate with that statement because it is a universal truth about people. Austrian Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl said, "Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for."[97] We're all on a search for the meaning in life, which helps statements like Dr. Craig's resonate with his audience, achieve identification, and create a willingness to receive what he says next.

In both debates, Dr. Craig concluded with a three minute testimony of his personal experience with God. His language resonated with the universal human search for meaning, a relationship with our Creator, and inner peace. When Dr. Craig used phrases like, "I began asking the big questions in life," and "I went through an intense soul-searching period," or "God felt distant and removed,"[98] his entire audience related and identified with him.

Another use of "Identification Through Affirmation of Universals" occurred when Dr. Craig discussed objective moral values. During the debate against Antony Flew, Dr. Craig suggested that objective moral values serve as evidence for the existence of God. He discussed torturing babies for fun as an acceptable act if there is not an objective moral law giver upon whom we can anchor objective moral values. He stated, however, that torturing for fun *is wrong*. It is wrong not merely because someone prefers not to do it, but because there is an objective standard accepted by humanity which affirms the inappropriate nature of the act. The audience identified with the opinion that it is necessarily wrong to torture babies for fun, and Dr. Craig gained their collaboration.

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[97] Viktor Frankl, *The Unheard Cry For Meaning; Psychotherapy and Humanism* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1978), 21.

[98] William Lane Craig, *Does God Exist; William Lane Craig/Antony Flew Debate,* 93 min., RZIM, 1988, DVD.

Using language which helped the crowd see Dr. Craig as a representative of their own journey created collaboration between the audience and Dr. Craig. For a speaker to reach identification and collaboration, "There must be a re-affirmation of the universal situation, of the universals of experience, of what is common to all men in all places."[99] Dr. Craig masterfully described the universal search for meaning, preparing his audience to best-receive his invitation to find meaning in life and peace with God as he did.

The Third Rhetorical Strategy: Gentleness and Reverence

The fifth rhetorical skill of "Gentleness and Reverence" involves using verbal and non-verbal communication to display a gentle affect and respect toward audience and opponent (in debate). This skill gains biblical support from I Peter 3:15-16, where Peter states: "but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."[100]

One vital disclaimer about this rhetorical skill needs mentioned: we are not gentle and reverent as a strategy, we are gentle and reverent because that is the fruit born from a vibrant relationship with Christ. The language of "strategy" or "skill" comes into play with "Gentleness and Reverence" in how we find intentional ways to display the character God is producing in us. In this regard it is a skill, or an intentional display. But unless our gentleness and reverence toward our audience is a by-product of a sincere spiritual work, it becomes a tactic, and God has not called us to tactics in representing Christ. As David Day writes:

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[99] Rueckert, 41.

[100] I Peter 3:15-16 ESV

I don't focus on myself in order that I should be an effective speaker of sermons. I concentrate on myself in the presence of God because that is what I ought to do. It is the heart of my devotion, my identity and my discipleship. Yet, as I seek God's face, I trust that he will so change my that, without my conscious effort, something of that renewed person will be caught and sensed by those to whom I speak.[101]

The only corrective I would offer to Day's point is that it is important to put "conscious effort" toward displaying the gentleness and reverence Christ enables and empowers us to display. This effort takes intentional thought and energy. This is where displaying "Gentleness and Reverence" becomes a skill and/or strategy.

When a speaker remains calm, non-combative, and gracious, she displays gentleness and respect toward the audience and/or debate opponent. Non-verbal communication such as posture, gestures, and facial expressions have the potential to communicate gentleness and respect, or harshness and disrespect.

An example of "Gentleness and Respect" would be when a speaker warmly expresses an appreciation for the opportunity to address his audience, or displays a respectful tone of voice when responding in a debate format, or even something as simple as to smile. All of these gestures communicate gentleness and respect and are powerful components of a winsome presentation.

For example, when Dr. Craig began his speech in the debate against Dr. Flew, he stated, "Good evening. I want to begin by expressing my thanks for participating in this event."[102] Then, moments later he stated, "It's a special honor to be sharing the platform

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[101] David Day, *Preaching With All You've Got; Embodying The Word* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2005), 18.

[102] William Lane Craig, *Does God Exist; William Lane Craig/Antony Flew Debate,* 93 min., RZIM, 1988, DVD.

with Professor Flew."[103] Likewise, when Dr. Craig began his speech in the debate against

Dr. Avalos, he stated, "I've also known Dr. Hector Avalos professionally for many years

now, and despite our disagreement on the topic of tonight's debate, I appreciate him as a

gentleman and a scholar."[104] These introductory statements presented in an appreciative

tone likely enhanced Dr. Craig's ethos with the entire audience.

Another example of the rhetorical skill of gentleness and respect came at the

conclusion of Dr. Craig's NPR interview with Tom Clark at the University of Wisconsin. At

the close of the interview, Tom Clark thanked Dr. Craig for the interview, and Dr. Craig

responded, "The pleasure was entirely mine." This phrase demonstrated an attitude of

gentleness and respect toward Tom, a confessed agnostic, and the NPR audience.

Throughout the three events I evaluated, Dr. Craig's non-verbal communication also

embodied "Gentleness and Reverence." He never raised his voice, quickened his pace, or

presented any gesture which suggested defensiveness. He remained a gentleman and a

scholar. In the two debates evaluated, the juxtaposition between Dr. Craig's presentation

and defense of the Christian truth compared to Dr. Avalos' cynical manner and Dr. Flew's

disorganized and defensive manner presented a powerful message in itself. Dr. Craig

embodied the character of Christ in how he presented truth clearly and with tremendous

intellect, yet always showing gentleness in his tone and posture and respect toward his

opponent and audience.

This gentle and reverent Christian conduct is designed by God to impact the world

for Christ. John Stott states:

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[103] Ibid.

[104] William Lane Craig, *The Resurrection of Jesus: Fact or Fiction; William Lane Craig/Hector Avalos Debate,* 83 min., Reasonable Faith Ministries, 2004, DVD.

One the one hand, inconsistent Christian conduct gives people cause to 'malign the word of God' and so hinders evangelism. On the other hand, consistent Christian conduct will 'make the teaching about God our Savior attractive and so will promote evangelism (Titus 2:5, 10). More briefly, bad behavior discredits the gospel, while good behavior adorns and so commends it.[105]

Dr. Craig's imitation of Christ's gentleness and reverence undoubtedly helped him gain collaboration with his audience.

The Fourth Rhetorical Strategy: Listening Rhetoric

Wayne Booth describes how "no rhetorical effort can succeed if it fails to join in the beliefs and passions of the audience addressed, and that almost always requires some 'accommodation,' 'adjustment,' or 'adaptation' to the audience's needs and expectations."[106] The rhetorical strategy of gaining collaboration with an audience through "Listening Rhetoric" involves a demonstration of sincere listening and accommodation on the part of the speaker.

"Listening Rhetoric" requires that the speaker works intentionally to understand an audience's or debate opponent's qualities or attributes or statements. The second step of the strategy involves the speaker displaying a genuine willingness to acknowledge his audience's or debate opponent's qualities, attributes, or statements in his presentation or reply.

There are several ways in which a speaker can acknowledge his audience's qualities, attributes, or statements. For example, restatement is an excellent way to acknowledge that an audience or opponent has been heard. When a speaker makes a statement such as, "If I

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[105] John R. Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity, Integrity and Faithfulness* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 39.

[106] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric; The Quest for Effective Communication* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 51.

heard you correctly, you stated *restatement of audience's/opponent's comment*," a speaker communicates the desire to listen and understand.

Another example of "Listening Rhetoric" would be when a speaker acknowledges a change, or modification, of position in response to an audience's or opponent's communication. A willingness to adapt, or change, reveals the speaker sees himself in a dialog with his audience or opponent. While a speaker should always be sincere, and should not state a change in position unless it is genuine, adjusting a paradigm in response to our audience's or opponent's communication is powerful evidence of "Listening Rhetoric."

During the Iowa State debate, Dr. Avalos criticized Dr. Craig for mishandling the Aramaic language in a book Dr. Craig published.[107] When Dr. Craig responded to Dr. Avalos' criticism he admitted to these mistakes, apologized for them, and said he plans to correct them in a later revision. This concession displayed an openness to accommodate Dr. Avalos' point and acknowledge a mistake. Listening in this manner encourages the audience to trust and listen to you, as well.

Listening-Rhetoric is a vital rhetorical skill toward persuasion. David Clark writes, "Careful listening helps one identify another's felt needs. This is important, since usually a person changes his world view only when his previous point of view fails to do its job."[108]

When an audience, or opponent, feels that they have been heard, and that upon hearing, the speaker has adjusted or accommodated their comment, collaboration is gained. John Stackhouse makes this point in his book Humble Apologetics:

> [Show] genuine appreciation of the other person's good points.
> Indeed, one must begin by being able to summarize accurately the other

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[107] William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith; Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994).

[108] David Clark, *Dialogic Apologetics; A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 210.

person's position – to that person's satisfaction – or one cannot proceed with serious conversation. Then you can find that some of your neighbor's points are enlightening to you as you consider them, and are genuine gifts from your friend to you.[109]

Stackhouse's point is that we do ourselves a service when we listen well. We not only represent our God, who listens well, but we encourage listening well in our audience or opponent. Stackhouse writes, "Furthermore, by acknowledging the virtues in another position, you are setting an appropriate example for your friend whom you hope, after all, will give due consideration to the point you want to raise. In short, this is simply the principle of fair play, and it is crucial to genuine dialog."[110] Dr. Craig's willingness to listen to and accommodate his audience and/or opponent's points strengthened his apologetic appeal by not merely speaking Christ's words, but displaying Christ's genuine concern for people.

Conclusion

The skill and strategy Dr. Craig primarily utilized was "Identification through Association." Multiple times during these three venues he intentionally associated himself with someone or something with whom or which the audience also associated. This skill served him well in gaining collaboration.

In addition to using this skill, Dr. Craig consistently displayed "Gentleness and Reverence" toward his debate opponent and/or audience. This was perhaps what impressed me the most about Dr. Craig. Every aspect of his rhetorical appeal – from his tone of voice, to his posture, to the pace at which he spoke – embodied Jesus' compassion and other-

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[109] John G. Stackhouse, *Humble Apologetics; Defending The Faith Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 169-10.

[110] Ibid., 170.

centeredness. Dr. Craig's "Gentleness and Reverence" was particularly noticeable during the debates he held against Dr. Avalos and Dr. Flew. It is obvious why Dr. Craig is frequently called upon to represent the Christian world-view to secular audiences; he is intelligent and winsome as an ambassador for God.

Chapter 4

DR. RAVI ZACHARIAS

The second exemplar evaluated is Dr. Ravi Zacharias. Dr. Zacharias holds a Masters of Divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and was a visiting scholar at Cambridge University. He has been conferred three honorary doctorates from Houghton College, Tyndale College and Seminary, and Asbury College. He is currently a Visiting Professor at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University in Oxford, England.

Dr. Zacharias is often called upon to present the Christian world-view to secular audiences. His vast theological and philosophical knowledge, along with his character and winsome rhetorical presentation, make him an exemplar in the area of Christian apologetics. The three events I evaluated for this thesis were, first, a presentation on the Christian world-view to students from the University of Iowa in 1997. The topic for the discussion was the top five questions that university students ask about Christianity. Dr. Zacharias responded to questions from the audience following the presentation.

The second event I evaluated was held in 1999, at the Cobb Galeria Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Zacharias presented for forty five minutes on the topic, "Is There Meaning in Evil and Suffering? A Christian Response to the Problem of Pain." Following his presentation, Dr. Zacharias took part in a panel discussion with Dr. Bernard Leikind, a renown atheist and skeptic, Dr. Jitendra Mohanty, one of India's Hindu philosophers, and Dr. William Lane Craig, the first exemplar in this study. This event was held in front of 1,800 attendees and was viewed via a satellite link by 100 colleges and universities across the United States and Canada.

The third event I evaluated was held in 2003 at the University of Michigan. Dr. Zacharias presented two nights on various topics. I evaluated the question and answers (Q & A) sessions from these two evenings.

As I did with the first exemplar, Dr. Craig, the rhetorical strategies utilized by Dr. Zacharias are described in order of highest occurrence.

The First Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Affirmation of Universals

Dr. Zacharias frequently "locate[d], describe[d], and satisfy[ied] the permanent, fundamental needs of man."[111] This was the most common rhetorical skill and strategy employed throughout these three venues.

During the presentation at the University of Iowa regarding the top five questions university students are asking about Christianity, the issue of the meaning of life arose. One student asked how the meaning of life is answered within a Christian world-view. Dr. Zacharias responded with this Affirmation of Universals statement: "But let me just say this, that the sense of belongingness is so real, and that longing for belonging is a hunger imprinted upon our hearts."[112] The thoughtfulness of this statement gained collaboration with the audience because all people can relate to this sentiment.

Later in the discussion at the University of Iowa, Dr. Zacharias introduced his appeal for Christ by stating: "I lay on a hospital bed when I was a teenager, I was 17 years old, finding no meaning in life, not knowing which way to turn to the truth, and not knowing which way was right. And as I lay on that hospital bed, having attempted to take my own life, all my friends probably puzzled over this, and certainly my family puzzled over it, the

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[111] William H. Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, 2nd ed. (Berkley: Univeristy of California Press, 1982), 41.

[112] Ravi Zacharias, *The Top 5 Questions University Students Ask About Christianity*, RZIM, 1997, CD.

Bible was brought to me and it was in the reading of John, chapter 14… there I read the words of Christ, 'I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father except through me.' And then Jesus going on to say that 'because I live, you shall live also.'"[113] Hearing Dr. Zacharias question the meaning of life, and where truth is to be found, helped the audience identify with his existential search for meaning. As Rueckert stated, "All people seek meaning in life, we all want to understand the purpose behind why we're here on this planet."[114]

Another poignant employment of "Identification Through Affirmation of Universals" occurred during the Faith & Science Lecture Forum. Dr. Zacharias, in introducing the topic of evil and the problem of reconciling pain and suffering with an all powerful, all loving God, stated, "Artists and musicians express the existential struggle that we go through in many areas of living, and this is indeed one of them." This acknowledgement of the universal struggle to make sense of suffering gained collaboration with his audience who had all experienced what Dr. Zacharias had eloquently stated. The primary benefit of collaboration, in this instance, was to enhance Dr. Zacharias' ethos and encourage the students to consider what he provided as a solution to this universal struggle.

The Second Rhetorical Strategy: Gentleness and Reverence

The second rhetorical skill Dr. Zacharias displayed was "Gentleness and Reverence." He consistently modeled the character of Christ in his other-centered, kind response to the audience or debate opponents.

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Rueckert, 41.

His opening comments at the Faith and Science Lecture Forum on "Is There Meaning in Evil and Suffering?" serves as an example. Dr. Zacharias said in reference to his opponents: "When you consider the scholarship of these gentlemen with whom we'll be interacting with, and my willingness to come here and address the subject, will prove beyond a reasonable doubt that some suffering is voluntary." This was not only a humorous way of opening the forum, it communicated a sincere respect and appreciation for the other presenters.

At the close of the Faith and Science forum, Dr. Zacharias made an equally respectful statement: "But I think it is wonderful that in an occasion like this, of the Faith and Science Lecture Forum, we can interact with those who will strongly disagree with us and my hope is that somehow in this interaction we'll begin to see that the strength or the weakness of the various arguments and various issues." By calling the venue "wonderful" occasion, Dr. Zacharias presented himself as someone who is gracious in his attitude toward debate and discussion.

During the presentation and question/answer time at the University of Michigan, Dr. Zacharias exhibited "Gentleness and Reverence" toward his audience. At one point, a young Muslim man asked a question regarding the simple command of Christ to love God and our neighbors, in contrast to the complete and thorough commands of Judaism and Islam's holy books. Dr. Zacharias began his response by stating, "I appreciate that [question], sir, and thanks for asking it. I think it is a wonderful question and can see why you even raise it, because when you look at the Islamic code, everything is joined –

everything is described."[115] This statement acknowledged the question as valid and complimented the young man for asking it.

Incidentally, the following night the same young Muslim man approached the microphone and Dr. Zacharias stated, "How are you, my friend? I'm glad you're back. I like you, go ahead."[116] This statement brought laughter and helped gain collaboration with his audience because he was gentle and respectful toward someone of a different religious world-view.

Perhaps the clearest display of the rhetorical skill of "Gentleness and Respect" occurred at the conclusion of the Faith and Science panel discussion. Dr. Zacharias closed his remarks by directly complimenting the atheist and the Hindu presenters. He stated to Dr. Leikind, the atheist, "Dr. Leikind, thank you for being a good sport." Then turning toward the crowd, Dr. Zacharias stated, "His writings carry an awful lot of wit. He's a brilliant man and does a lot of witty work and walking on fire is one of his hobbies, so the fireworks didn't trouble him a bit tonight, I'm sure."[117]

Likewise, turning toward Dr. Mohanty, he stated: "The more I've read your writings, the more I wish I had the opportunity of studying under you, sir. Although our conclusions and our philosophies are worlds apart, I would have enjoyed the opportunity of just listening more to you."[118] These two closing remarks were winsome, respectful, and undoubtedly left the audience with a taste of the character of Christ in their mouth.

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[115] Dr. Zacharias, *Is There Meaning in Evil and Suffering? A Christian Response to the Problem of Pain,* 45 min., RZIM, 1999, DVD.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

The Third Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Disassociation

The third strategy Dr. Zacharias frequently employed was "Identification Through Disassociation." This rhetorical strategy parallels "Identification Through Association" until the second step, whereby the speaker *disassociates,* rather than *associates,* himself from the named someone or something. "Identification through Disassociation" involves the following three step process:

> 1) The speaker names or identifies someone or something according to specific values or qualities; 2) the speaker disassociates with the someone or something named by expressing unshared values or qualities; 3) the speaker achieves the end result of identifying with our audience or opponent, or reaching a state of being consubstantial with others.[119]

An example of "Identification by Disassociation" would be a theologically conservative speaker addressing a conservative audience, naming or identifying liberal ideology, and then making several negative comments or suggestions regarding that ideology. The identification, or naming, of liberal ideology would be the first step. Then, in so far as the speaker's audience, or debate opponent, agrees with the disassociation from the named thing or person, in this case, liberal ideology, then the disassociation would thus create a state of consubstantiality with her audience.

Dr. Zacharias, for example, in response to Dr. Leikind's argument against Christianity concerning the amount of violence perpetuated in the "name of God," stated: "You've raised an important point, and I think it's a point that's a dark blotch upon history – the religious wars, the deadly scourge that people in the name of God have perpetuated."[120] This is a subtle instance of "Identification through Disassociation," but by identifying the

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[119] Quigley, *Identification.*

[120] Zacharias, *Is There Meaning in Evil and Suffering? A Christian Response to the Problem of Pain.*

violence and then standing against it with his statement, he creates identification with his opponent (and the audience) who feels the same way.

Another example of "Identification through Disassociation" occurred in the beginning of Dr. Zacharias presentation at the Faith and Science Lecture Forum. He made the point that all people must have an answer to the existential question of "what is our purpose in life." All religions must account for this to be a valid religion. He then stated, "Most secular humanists I have read have assigned no established purpose to suffering. But I will give you a purpose."[121] This naming of secular humanists and assessment of their inability to provide a purpose for suffering, then a disassociation from them, encouraged his listeners to identify with him. His listeners were there because they wanted an answer, they believed there must be a purpose, so this disassociation created collaboration with Dr. Zacharias.

One significant moment of "Identification through Disassociation" occurred during a discussion on naturalism's inability to account for purpose in suffering. Dr. Zacharias quoted Viktor Frankl, a survivor of the Auschwitz prison camp as saying, "The gas chambers of Auschwitz were the ultimate consequence of the theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment - or, as the Nazis liked to say, 'of blood and soil.'"[122] By stating the necessary, and morally deprived, conclusion of naturalism – a conclusion so utterly reprehensible to moral beings – and then disassociating himself from that world-view, Dr. Zacharias gained collaboration with his audience.

Naming something, or someone, and then disassociating yourself from that thing can be a powerful rhetorical skill and/or strategy. To the degree a speaker identifies with the

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

audience's disassociation from a particular position, or person, that audience will collaborate with the speaker. Dr. Zacharias had prepared several quotations and references for a secular audience from which he could name, disassociate, and then gain audience identification.

The Fourth Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Association

Several times during these three events Dr. Zacharias used "Identification Through Association." For example, during the question and answer session at the University of Michigan, Dr. Zacharias made the point that we should judge a world-view based on the quality of life lived by its central adherent. Following that point, he stated, "I've spent much time with Buddhist monks and, I'm not lying to you, they've all said the most perfect life ever lived was Jesus Christ."[123]

Another example of "Identification Through Association" occurred when Dr. Zacharias had explained the bankruptcy of a naturalistic world-view by quoting atheist Stephen Hawking. Dr. Zacharias stated, "It is not uncommon in Cambridge today to see Stephen Hawking in an evangelical church, every now and then." He went on to state that when Hawking was asked why, he said, "Maybe I'm on a spiritual pilgrimage. What else can I say?"[124] In a masterful way, Dr. Zacharias associated one of the world's renown atheistic thinkers with his own journey toward God.

In like fashion, during the Faith and Science Lecture Forum, after making the point that an atheistic world-view is unlivable and void of all morality, Dr. Zacharias quoted atheist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre in agreement. Zacharias stated, "On his deathbed, as an atheist, [Jean-Paul Sartre] acknowledged that his non-theistic, atheistic framework became

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[123] Ravi Zacharias, *Q & A, Volume Two; Recorded Live at the University of Michigan,* 60 min., RZIM, 2003, DVD.

[124] Ibid.

plainly unlivable."[125] Finding association with an atheist brilliantly helped atheists in the audience collaborate with Dr. Zacharias, against the atheistic world-view.

The Fifth Rhetorical Strategy: Listening Rhetoric

Dr. Zacharias occasionally displayed "Listening Rhetoric" as a rhetorical skill. During the forum in Michigan, in response to a Muslim man's objection to Christianity based on the multiple denominations, Dr. Zacharias stated: "I appreciate what you're saying and I think there's a lot of truth to what you're saying… but I think you're forgetting an awful lot, too." Beginning by acknowledging some agreement and accommodation of the man's statement demonstrated "Listening Rhetoric."

Another example also took place during the Michigan forum when another man raised an objection to Christianity based on the amount of violence which has occurred "in the name of God." Dr. Zacharias responded to the man by stating, "What we see are the horrors of that exact problem you mentioned."

Likewise, to a third gentlemen who raised a question regarding the credibility of Jesus because of his reference to the incredible incident regarding Jonah, in Matthew 12:38-45, Dr. Zacharias stated: "To say that any honest thinking Christian doesn't think about it, would be dishonest." This statement acknowledged the issue and displayed a tremendous amount of respect to the questioner.

During all three venues Dr. Zacharias displayed "Listening Rhetoric" in how actively he listened to the audience or other presenters. When the camera would pan to Dr. Zacharias, during a question or comment by another person, he would be listening intently, eyes fixed on the person respectfully. This is difficult to describe, being subjective, but his

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[125] Zacharias, *Is There Meaning in Evil and Suffering? A Christian Response to the Problem of Pain.*

non-verbal, physical posture displayed a genuine interest to listen and understand the other person.

Conclusion

Dr. Zacharias connected with his audience(s) through "Identification through Affirmation of Universals" in a dynamic manner. He used all five rhetorical skills and strategies well during these three venues, but "Identification through Affirmation of Universals" was particularly effective for him.

Dr. Zacharias has a unique ability to identify with people of other faith-systems. Originally from India, Dr. Zacharias is intimately familiar with the Hindu and Buddhist faith systems. He often quotes from the authoritative writings of these two world-views. This experience with Eastern thought, coupled with his considerate and respectful presentation, makes Dr. Zacharias one of the Christendom's leading apologists.

Chapter 5

GREGORY KOUKL

The third exemplar evaluated is Greg Koukl. Koukl is the Founder and President of the apologetics organization, Stand to Reason.[126] He holds a Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics from Talbot School of Theology, and a Masters in Christian Apologetics from Simon Greenleaf University. In addition to his leadership at Stand to Reason, Koukl is an adjunct professor in Christian Apologetics at Biola University.

Like Dr. Craig and Dr. Zacharias, Greg Koukl is frequently called upon to defend the Christian faith to secular audiences. He has published over 145 articles and has spoken on more than 40 university and college campuses in the United States and overseas.

Koukl has been interviewed on the BBC and has been quoted in *U.S. News & World Report* and the *L.A. Times.* He has authored the book *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* with Francis J. Beckwith and *Precious Unborn Human Persons.* He has presents the gospel in a winsome, dynamic way to seculars. For this reason Koukl is an outstanding apologist and exemplar for this study.

The three events I evaluated for this project were, first, in April of 2004, Koukl gave a lecture on the topic of "Relativism" at the University of California, Berkeley. Following the lecture he fielded questions from the audience, consisting predominantly of secular college students and professors. The second event was a debate held on national television on the show *Faith Under Fire.* The topic debated was: "The Future of Faith." This debate was held between Koukl and Deepak Chopra, MD, a naturalist writer and thinker. It was

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[126] Cf. website: www.STR.org

aired on PAX Television on April 30, 2005. The interviewer was Lee Strobel, the host of *Faith Under Fire.*

The third event was also a television event, called *Test of Faith*, which was broadcast in 2004. *Test of Faith* is a national television show aired in Toronto, Canada, and hosted by Valerie Pringle. The question for the debate was: "Do all religions lead to God?" Koukl presented the view that truth is not relative; the various claims made by religious systems are mutually exclusive and can not all be true. He was debated by three panelists: T. Sher Singh, a Lawyer and Sikh; Rivkah Unland, an United Church of Canada Minister, and Pandit Suraj Persad, a Hindu Chaplain. These three panelists disagreed with Koukl and contended for the idea that "many paths can lead to God."

The First Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Affirmation of Universals

The primary rhetorical strategy Koukl used was "Identification Through Affirmation of Universals." He frequently "locate[d], describe[d], and satisfy[ied] the permanent, fundamental needs of man."[127] For example, during the television debate against naturalist Deepak Chopra, Koukl identified the universal value of believing what is reasonable when he stated, "I'm not interested in a leap of faith *against reason*."[128] Addressing this fundamental desire within humanity to be reasonable creatures and then associating with this desire encouraged the audience to collaborate with Koukl.

Intuitively following playwright Tennessee Williams' statement, "Guilt is universal,"[129] during the same debate with Dr. Chopra, Koukl named this universally felt

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[127] William H. Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, 2nd ed. (Berkley: Univeristy of California Press, 1982), 41.

[128] Greg Koukl, *Faith Under Fire*, hosted by Lee Strobel, filmed on April 30, 2005, in Zondervan's studio.

[129] Tennessee Williams, *Three Plays of Tennessee Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1964), 336.

condition of guilt and then encouraged his audience to accept his reasons behind why we feel guilty. He stated, "I think individuals are aware that they've done things that are bad, and they feel guilty for a reason, not because they're ignorant [a position previously stated by Dr. Chopra in the debate], they feel guilty because they *are guilty* and they're looking for a solution and the solution to guilt is not denial, it's forgiveness."[130] Collaborating with his audience on the universal feeling of guilt encouraged Koukl's audience to consider collaborating with him on his conclusion that all people need forgiveness.

During the University of California, Berkeley lecture on "Relativism," Koukl drew from the same universal feeling of guilt when he stated:

> We look down inside of ourselves in our most honest moments and we see something inside ourselves we do not like and the thing that we see that is twisted and broken is moral, something evil down there lurks, and we try not to show this to other people; we don't want them to see this. We try to deny it in ourselves, but we can't get away from it and we know it, something's wrong. And that has a feeling. And that feeling has a name. What do you think the name of that feeling is, about our moral brokenness? Guilt. We all feel guilty. This is universal, anyone who doesn't feel guilty is a sociopath.[131]

Koukl masterfully grabbed the audience, helped them identify with the deep, hidden feelings of guilt they bear, and then he used that collaboration to make a suggestion that this guilt is evidence of our violation of moral laws.

Another instance in which Koukl employed the rhetorical skill of "Identification through Affirmation of Universals" occurred during the Canadian television program *Test of Faith*. He was defending the position that not all religious paths lead to God, when Teshare Sing (opponent) suggested that Koukl's position was narrow-minded. Teshare Sing presented the idea that the world is too complicated for any one person to assume their

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[130] Koukl, *Faith Under Fire*.

[131] Greg Koukl, "Relativism Lecture" during *The Berkeley Lectures with Question and Answer Sessions,* 89 min., Stand To Reason, 2004, DVD.

understanding is correct. Koukl responded with the "Identification through Affirmation of Universals" rhetorical strategy, stating: "I think that there is a way that the world actually is, and I do not think anybody should be faulted for trying to figure out what that is, first of all, and secondly, coming to some, even if provisional, conclusions about it."[132]

Koukl's statement, "I think that there is a way that the world actually is," was an effective way of naming the universal belief that we can know and understand various things about our universe. This statement resonated with people and helped them collaborate with Koukl's desire to try and "figure out" those things which can be known.

Greg Koukl used "Identification through Affirmation of Universals" in a poignant moment during the Berkeley lectures when he made the point that humans have inherent value. He argued for the idea that human life has such a high value that not even an individual person has the right to harm himself. He referenced the tragic crime committed against Matthew Shepherd, the homosexual young man who was murdered in Wyoming in 1998. Koukl posed the rhetorical question, "What if Matthew Shepherd had *consented* to being brutally beaten and murdered, would that have made the death excusable?" He replied with what could be argued is a universal affirmation when he said: "I don't think so. I think human beings have a certain value to them and it's not even right for human beings to destroy that value even if they consent."[133]

This particular comment gained collaboration on a number of fronts. First, Koukl condemned the act of hatred and violence against another person. By using the example of Matthew Shepherd, a *homosexual*, Koukl displayed his compassion for *all humans*, even if they live a lifestyle with which Koukl disagrees. (Greg Koukl's audience in Berkeley, CA, would

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[132] Greg Koukl, *Test of Faith,* Stand To Reason, 2004, CD.

[133] Koukl, *Relativism Lecture.*

certainly have assumed Koukl's position against the homosexual lifestyle.) This was also strategic in that Koukl identified and tapped into the inherently sensed value people feel is attached to human life. This collaboration helped prepare his audience to receive the point which followed regarding the value of humanity being determined by its creator. This was one of Koukl's most skillful employments of "Identification through Affirmation of Universals."

The Second Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Association

Much like the first two exemplars, Koukl skillfully gained identification by naming something, then identifying himself with that place, person, or idea. For example, he used humor, alongside of "Identification through Association," when he opened his talk at Berkeley by stating, "I come to a place like [Berkeley] and the air is so clean. I'm like Woody Allen, I don't trust air I can't see." In this statement Koukl identified the beauty of Northern California compared to his hometown, Los Angeles, and made light of the fact that it has better quality air. While this comment came across casually, it was clearly an intentional way Koukl sought to gain collaboration with this crowd from Northern California.

Likewise, shortly after his "clean air" comment, Koukl strategically identified the free-thinking spirit of the University of California, Berkeley during the late 1960's and early 1970's, and then encouraged his audience to identify with that open minded, non-conventional, view of life. He stated:

> I was on campus 32 years ago, last time I was here it was because I lived in the community, just right down the street in Albany. My life and Berkeley was quite a bit different then. I don't know if you're all aware of the heritage that you have. I'm sure some of you know. The Berkeley I knew had started a revolution in thinking in this country and the students there were willing to ask the tough questions, the students were willing to challenge the status quo,

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they were unwilling to go along with the crowd, they were unwilling to accept conventions for the sake of conventions and in short, the students of the Berkeley of the 60's and 70's wanted to think for themselves. Now, I'm counting, for this evening and tomorrow evening, on the same spirit of intellectual honesty because there's a new status quo, now there's a new convention, now there's a new crowd that demands compliance and it's the idea of this new establishment that I want to challenge tonight. I'm here in the spirit of the Berkeley of the 60's to challenge a status quo.[134]

This introduction to his talk on "Relativism" was brilliant in how it identified the heritage for which many of these students went to Berkeley, then encouraged them to follow suit and be open-minded to Koukl's upcoming lectures.

Another instance in which Koukl relied on association as a rhetorical skill was when he named and identified the free-spirited, open-minded attitude of Berkeley students from the 1960's, and then associated with that attitude in order to gain collaboration with the audience. He took these steps when he made the following opening remarks:

> I'm here tonight as a follower of Jesus Christ. Now, you have to know that there was a time when I never would have imagined myself saying those words – 32 years ago when I was in this community, myself. I thought I was too smart to become a Christian. I thought all Christians were either dumb or ugly. (Audience laughed) Or both. (Greater laughter) This is why they went to church, they couldn't think for themselves so they had someone else think for them and they were just to socially unacceptable to find acceptance anywhere else so they went to the church where one of the rules was you had to love one another. But, I was persuaded that Christianity was worth thinking about. And now of course the irony is that I've given my life to defending Christianity because I actually think Christ is true![135]

These opening comments grabbed the Berkeley audience's attention, encouraged them to identify with the free-spirited, intellectual exploration of the Berkeley heritage, and apply that orientation during Koukl's lectures.

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[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

Another instance in which Greg Koukl thoughtfully used "Identification through Association" occurred during the debate with Deepak Chopra on *Faith Under Fire*. Dr. Chopra made a comment that because people around the world hold different beliefs, it is narrow minded to view any one belief as true. Koukl sought identification with Dr. Chopra by strategically drawing from Dr. Chopra's medical career. Koukl stated, "Dr. Chopra, you're a medical doctor. Not everyone, everywhere understands medicine. That doesn't make medicine untrue."[136] After gaining collaboration, Koukl made the parallel to religious truth, suggesting that just because various people might hold to different religious beliefs and may not understand Christianity, doesn't mean Christianity is not true.

One final example of "Identification through Association" occurred during the debate against Dr. Chopra. Dr. Chopra posed the challenge that God, being infinitely large, is unknowable. Chopra stated, "Concepts about God are limited. I don't think we can conceptualize God."[137] Koukl very kindly identified and named Dr. Chopra's *own* previous writings about God – his *conceptualizations* about God – and then pointed out that for Dr. Chopra to write about God, he must have conceptualized God. In doing so, Koukl associated, or agreed, with Chopra's presupposition behind his conceptualizations of God, namely, that God *can be* conceptualized, in an attempt to gain collaboration from Chopra during the debate. Koukl stated to Lee Strobel, the moderator: "Dr. Chopra, in his book, talks a lot about all kinds of concepts about God, so if you can't conceptualize God, you can't write books about what God is like and how to know him and be more god-like."[138]

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[136] Koukl, *Faith Under Fire*.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

Pointing out a discrepancy within Chopra's writing and His comment during this debate, while it felt polemical, was a powerful rhetorical device in encouraging agreement from Dr. Chopra. Dr. Chopra responded in silence, with a slight nod of the head; the rhetorical affect of Chopra's response was that it left the audience with the sense that he conceded, or agreed, with Koukl's point.

The Third Rhetorical Strategy: Identification Through Disassociation

There were several instances during these three events whereby Greg Koukl used "Identification through Disassociation." An example of "Identification through Disassocation" which likely gained collaboration with many people in Koukl's audience occurred when Dr. Chopra made statements about God being impersonal and unknowable. Koukl disassociated with this idea by stating, "This is where I think there is a very big difference between what Dr. Chopra believes and what I believe, and what Jesus Himself believes and Classical Christianity has taught – It is possible to be in a relationship with God. He is a personal being who allows for interaction and communication."[139] In so far as the audience instinctively suspects that God is a knowable Being, they will follow this disassociation from Chopra and collaborate with Koukl.

Another time Koukl used "Identification through Disassociation" occurred during the debate over religious pluralism on the Canadian television show *Test of Faith*. Koukl named the position that his opponents held – characterized in the statement, "all roads lead to God" – and then disassociated with that position using a rational argument. He appealed to the logic that two or more mutually exclusive truth claims cannot be true. Koukl provided the example, "Jesus is God, or Jesus isn't God," or "God is personal, or God isn't

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[139] Ibid.

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personal," but, as he reasoned, both can't be true. This use of reason to disassociate from the three religious pluralist panel members would have gained collaboration from those who could follow the logic.

Koukl appeared to employ "Identification through Association" twice as frequently as "Identification through Disassociation," yet both were tools in his apologetic tool-box.

The Fourth Rhetorical Strategy: Gentleness and Reverence

All three of the exemplars displayed "Gentleness and Reverence" with great intentionality. Koukl remained kind and winsome throughout all three of these events. His "Gentleness and Reverence" occurred at the very outset of his talk on the University of California, Berkley campus. Koukl's first words were "I'm honestly very touched by your warmth."[140] This statement is disarming and quickly displayed how he was not there as a person seeking to win at all costs. It revealed kindness and someone who appreciates kindness when it is displayed back to him.

Another example of "Gentleness and Respect" occurred after the rousing debate against Dr. Chopra. Koukl concluded with the following gracious remark: "Many of the things Dr. Chopra said, I'm in favor of: love, compassion, peace, kindness, and all of those things. But, those are doctrinal points of view. These are points of view which are a part of religious system, his system, and in many ways my system holds the same things."[141] Koukl was not going to let Dr. Chopra off the hook regarding having a system of beliefs which allow him to conceive and describe God, but he found several things to affirm and compliment in the same breath.

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[140] Koukl, *Relativism Lecture.*

[141] Koukl, *Faith Under Fire.*

One way Koukl displayed genuine respect for his audience came in how he stated that his purpose was to *challenge*, not convert, them. The following introductory remarks during his lecture at the University of California, Berkley, displayed a willingness to respect his audience's right to weigh the evidence and decide for themselves.

> I have a very modest goal [for my talk], by the way. I'm not here to convert you, if you're not a follower of Christ, that's not my goal for tonight. My goal is much more modest than that – my goal is to put an intellectual stone in your shoe. I want to give you something worth thinking about. I hope I can make some points this evening and tomorrow evening on controversial issues that you have not heard before, maybe, that gets you thinking, that gets you questioning the status quo, that gets you challenging the conventions that have been handed down to you in this post-modern age.[142]

Koukl's modest goal displayed respect for his listeners and this helped him increase his ethos as someone who is kind-hearted and respectful.

Several displays of "Gentleness and Reverence" occurred during the question and answer session following Koukl's presentation on "Relativism." Koukl responded to several objections, some flavored with hostility, with comments such as, "Thanks for the challenge," or "That is a fair question," or "You raise an excellent question." These three statements followed objections to the material Koukl had just presented.

Perhaps the most obvious example of "Gentleness and Reverence" occurred when a Berkeley student raised an objection Koukl kindly, yet clearly defeated the objection, and then the student tried to object to his argument. The student staggered a bit verbally, obviously shaken from having his position refuted. The student nervously stated, "Umm… I'm not much of a public speaker." To which, Koukl warmly replied, "Oh, you're doing fine. You're funny [Referring to a prior moment when the student made a witty remark].

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[142] Koukl, *Relativism Lecture*.

That's the first step. You've got a good start."[143] This humor Koukl provided eased the tension of the moment and helped everyone see that Koukl was not offended by opposition. The student at the microphone was able to collect himself and offer another comment.

One consistent pattern seen with all exemplars is their intentional display of "Gentleness and Reverence" in their closing comments. Koukl concluded his first lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, by stating: "I have had a wonderful time here with you this evening and I hope to see you all back tomorrow evening when we talk about the issue of religion."[144] His tone of voice equally displayed his appreciation for the opportunity to address this audience. This enhanced Koukl's ethos and represented the character of Christ well.

The Fifth Rhetorical Strategy: Listening Rhetoric

Koukl provided clear instances of "Listening Rhetoric" when he stated numerous times during the debate against Dr. Chopra, "I have confidence in my view, I could be mistaken. I'm willing to listen to other people's view."[145] Throughout this study I have questioned how a Christian apologist, or speaker, can project both a confidence in his position and a willingness to listen to, and perhaps accommodate, another point of view. This statement is perfect example of this balance. He has obviously given forethought to this rhetorical skill of "Listening Rhetoric."

Another consistent display "Listening Rhetoric" occurred whenever Koukl responded to his debate opponent. He made numerous comments proving that he had

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[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Koukl, *Faith Under Fire*.

heard and appreciated what his opponent had stated. For example, during the debate with

Dr. Chopra, Koukl stated, "I agree with Dr. Chopra that there are right and wrong answers

to these issues and these answers matter."[146] This point helps advance Koukl's point, but

simply quoting Chopra verbatim displayed his desire and decision to listen carefully.

Likewise, Koukl stated in response a remark Chopra made about man's notions of God have

seemed to evolve, "[Dr. Chopra's] right [when] he said that God doesn't evolve, our ideas of

God evolve." Again, this is simply an example of Koukl looking for opportunities to re-

state his opponents comment and agree with it. While there were not obvious concessions

or moments of accommodation, this desire to restate and agree with an opponent displays a

genuine interest in listening.

Greg Koukl obviously gives great forethought and intentionality into preparation for

his lectures and debates. He presents the truth of Christianity in a winsome manner which

provides several opportunities within each venue for his audience to identify and collaborate

with him.

The following chapter will review the three exemplar and draw conclusions based on

this research. I will also provide brief thoughts on future study which would benefit this

discussion of "Embodying Jesus verses Presenting Christ."

Conclusion

I've known Greg Koukl on a personal level for several years. He cares deeply about

presenting the truths in a winsome manner, as well as accurately and with biblical integrity.

The primary skill Koukl used in these three venues was "Identification through Affirmation

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[146] Ibid.

of Universals." He is skillful at identifying the human situation in life and then finding words to communicate that situation in such a way as to encourage collaboration from the audience. Koukl used personal stories and anecdotes from his own life with Jesus, along with "Identification through Affirmation of Universals," to connect with the audience on a deeper level.

Koukl is the Founder and Director of the apologetics resource center "Stand To Reason" in California. His radio program reaches thousands of secular thinkers each week, evinced by the vast number of "callers" who engage him on a daily basis over the airwaves. After studying Koukl as an exemplar for this thesis it has become even more obvious why he is frequently called upon to represent Christ to various secular organizations. He is a dynamic speaker and apologist who presents truth clearly and systematically, while embodying Jesus with his entire rhetorical appeal.

Chapter 6

EMBODYING JESUS

Embodying Jesus Verses Presenting Christ

Having laid the theological foundation for "Embodying Jesus" and after examining three exemplars who embody Jesus with excellence, this final chapter provides conclusions and suggestions for future research. Merely presenting Christ might be acceptable if people received information one-dimensionally. If our secular friends and relatives simply craved intellectual knowledge as their sole hunger and need, laying out the Romans road or the Four Spiritual Laws would be a fully-sufficient presentation of God.

But our secular friends and relatives do not *merely* crave intellectual knowledge, they crave an encounter with the Person who created them and desires to speak into their achings.

J.P. Moreland calls our lost friends and relatives "empty selves,"[147] people who are focused on how they feel, or want to feel. They feel a void inside, an emptiness, which makes them process life based primarily on feelings. Philip Cushman writes about the empty self:

> The empty self is filled up with consumer goods, calories, experiences, politicians, romantic partners, and empathetic therapists… [The empty self] experiences a significant absence of community, tradition, and shared meaning… a lack of personal conviction and worth, and it embodies the absences as a chronic, undifferentiated emotional hunger.[148]

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[147] J.P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 24.

[148] Philip Cushman, "Why the Self is Empty: Toward a Historically Situated Psychology," *American Psychologist* 45 (May 1990): 599-611, quoted in J.P. Moreland's, *Kingdom Triangle* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 25.

Moreland and Cushman make an important observation; people are craving fulfillment, and it is not solely intellectual in nature. In fact, they contend that this craving is primarily emotional in nature. Regardless, they make a vital point that the human self is multi-faceted, meaning the self has various factors to it. Each factor is distinct from the others, but together they comprise the one single self. The six factors of a human's life Willard defines are: "thought," "feeling," "will (spirit)," "body," "social context," and "soul."[149]

Willard writes about these six factors and how they must operate in a human self:

[And] the subject of our study in approaching human life – the "unit of analysis" for our study – is the whole person in its social and spiritual context. The six "aspects," as we have called them, are distinct ranges of abilities, things all human beings – but not squirrels or brussels sprouts – can and must do: We can and must feel, think, choose, act, and be acted upon through our body. We must enter or lack personal relations and integrate each of these aspects of our being with all the others. This latter task is the work of the soul, as already noted, which is the deepest level of unity (or disunity) in a person's life and the most inclusive object of redemption.[150]

Willard suggests that for a human being to function well, these six facets of personhood must interact with each other in good health.

God desires to bring new life to the entire self, not merely the intellect. If God desires to renovate this complex human self through the breath of his Spirit, should we not also expect Him to use His people to contact and address the complete person? Would we not expect God to speak into and satisfy the ache in, not only a person's thought-life, but also their feelings, will, body, social context, and soul?

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[149] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart; Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2002), 38.

[150] Ibid., 32.

Communicating the gospel as a series of truths to be accepted by an intellect or in a person's "thought" life, while neglecting a person's feelings, will, body, social context, and soul is functioning too narrowly as a representative of Christ. Our gospel appeal must seek to put the whole person in connection with the living God, not merely the thought life.

In this point lies our distinction between "presenting Christ" and "embodying Jesus." If one approaches his responsibility as an ambassador for Christ – someone who has the Spirit of God in his heart compelling him to work with God as "he makes his appeal through us"[151] – by solely communicating the truth claims of Christianity, he is "presenting Christ." If one approaches his responsibility as an ambassador for Christ by representing the character and compassion of Jesus in a way that introduces the person of God to a multi-faceted self, he is "embodying Jesus."

The distinction between these two categories – "presenting Christ" verses "embodying Jesus" – is one of world-view; meaning, how a person views God, the world, and their role as a follower of Jesus Christ. Does a follower of Jesus Christ see herself as primarily a communicator of truth or someone who brings Jesus to bear on the full gamut of personhood and human need within an "empty self"? Does a follower of Jesus view other people as needing to hear the truth of God communicated *solely* in oral or written form or does he view people as needing a holistic encounter; an encounter with not only truth communicated orally or in writing, but also in the character and compassion of Christ fleshed out in the person representing Jesus? How one answers these questions reveals whether their vision as an ambassador involves presenting Christ or embodying Jesus.

Embodying Jesus within the function of public speaking (preaching, debating, lecturing, or fielding questions) presents a unique challenge. Inherent in public speaking is a

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151 II Corinthians 5:20 ESV

reliance on oral communication. How does one embody Jesus and not merely present Christ in the pulpit, or while speaking in civic functions, or while teaching and debating in academic settings? This was the subject under investigation in my research project.

This research project investigated what rhetorical principles can be derived from evaluating three exemplar apologists who embody Jesus, rather than present Christ, to secular, postmodern audiences valuing religious tolerance. Relying heavily on Kenneth Burke's theory of identification and Wayne Booth's "Listening-Rhetoric,"[152] a template for evaluation was developed (see Appendix A). Three exemplars – Dr. William Lane Craig, Dr. Ravi Zacharias, and Greg Koukl – were evaluated during three different venues each.

Wayne Booth's discussion on "Judging Rhetoric"[153] helped address the inner attitudes of the person Embodying Jesus. That analysis will follow in the next section, "Embodying Jesus verses Winning Discussions." Kenneth Burke's writing on identification and collaboration proved helpful in determining the difference in "Embodying Jesus verses Presenting Christ."

Kenneth Burke provides valuable insights into successful interaction between a speaker and an audience. Burke has tremendous insight into the human need to fill the "empty self," described by Moreland and Cushman. Burke describes how every human has an innate desire to identify with other people. Quigley, commenting on Burke's theory of identification writes: "As Burke sees it, the human need to identify provides a rich resource for those interested in joining us or, more importantly, persuading us."[154]

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[152] Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric; The Quest for Effective Communication* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 51.

[153] Ibid.*,* 39-54.

[154] Quigley, *Identification*.

Burke worked out his theory of identification primarily as a tool toward social agreement, or cohesion. He did not write as a theist, or as a Christian ambassador – Burke's primary purpose in discussing "identification" was to help the individuals within society collaborate with other people in society successfully. Writing about Burke's motive for his theory of identification, Quigley comments:

> His goal is that we learn to perceive at what points we are using and abusing language to cloud our vision, create confusion, or justify various and ever present inclinations toward conflict, war and destruction – or our equally-present inclinations toward cooperation, peace and survival. Thus, Burke sees in a process such as identification, the working out of the daily mundane processes of social life, as well as the larger, significant choices that may lead to our corporate destruction or salvation.[155]

While Burke was writing primarily to offer suggestions toward improving social cohesion, his discussion of identification toward persuasion is helpful for the Christian apologist and speaker. The three exemplars analyzed for this research project took intentional steps to created collaboration through identification. Several key observations were made concerning embodying Jesus while presenting Christian truth in a speaking venue.

First, each of the exemplars relied heavily on "Identification through Affirmation of Universals." Of all the rhetorical skills and strategies observed, this one deserves special treatment. "Identification through Affirmation of Universals" was the primary skill used by Dr. Zacharias and Greg Koukl and was the second most frequently used skill by Dr. Craig. Throughout the nine venues, this particular rhetorical device appeared the most strategic toward embodying Jesus.

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[155] Ibid.

When an exemplar "located, described, and satisfied a permanent, fundamental need of mankind"[156] he invited the audience or opponent to identify with him on a personal and holistic level; meaning, on a level which engages the entire person. More than just the intellect is invited into the speaking experience through "Affirmation of Universals"; the entire self is encouraged to participate.

Burke describes how listeners will persuade themselves when a speaker identifies universal images: "To act upon himself persuasively, he [receiver] must variously resort to images and ideas that are formative."[157] The "images and ideas that are formative" is another way of describing universal images or ideas. People are attracted to universal ideas because they find easily find themselves in them; their values, their needs; their hopes and ambitions.

This being true, perhaps the strongest persuasive appeal occurs when we combine universal language with our own journey. Both the affirmation of universals and the personal story invite self-persuasion on the part of the listener.

While writing this final chapter I had a discussion with my parents over dinner. My father is agnostic and my mother considers herself a "designer Buddhist," someone who has taken pieces from several religions, primarily Buddhism, to craft her world-view. Neither my father nor mother believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that salvation is found by grace through faith in Him. Both are well-educated, secular psychologists. Our discussion that evening centered on the great longing within humanity to find peace. I presented three logical arguments – the first argument was for the existence of God, then for human depravity, and then finally for the need and availability of forgiveness in Christ. I concluded

156 William H. Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, 2nd ed. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1982), 41.

157 Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 39.

with the story of my journey to find peace and how it resulted in a personal relationship with God based on forgiveness through Jesus. The discussion lasted about two hours.

At the end of the night my mother made a poignant comment, one relating directly to this thesis. She stated, "Zeke, I don't know if you realize this, but you are most persuasive when you talk about your life personally. When you use big words or philosophical arguments, I lose interest in listening. But when you talk about your story, I enjoy our talk and find that I want to *question things for myself.*" There it was – unsolicited affirmation that self-persuasion comes through "affirmation of universals" and discussion of a personal journey.

Logical arguments for the hope we have in Jesus are important tools in the ambassador's tool-box. My mother's comment certainly does not minimize the importance of studying and developing rational arguments for the faith. Yet, it does illustrate the importance of the identification and collaboration which follows a Christian witness' appeal to universals through their personal experience with Jesus. This certainly is not a new idea. John Stott stated this clearly in 1961 when he wrote:

> In our preaching, we do not just expound words which have been committed to our stewardship. Nor do we only proclaim as heralds a might deed of redemption which has been done. But, in addition, we expound these words and proclaim this deed as witnesses, as those who have come to a vital experience of this Word and Deed of God. We have seen His redeeming Deed as having been done for us, and we have entered by faith into the immeasurable benefits of it. Our task is not to lecture about Jesus with philosophical detachment. We have become personally involved in Him. His revelation and redemption have changed our lives. Our eyes have been opened to see Him, and our ears unstopped to hear Him, as our Saviour and Lord. We *are* witnesses; so we must *bear* witness. Certainly, we shall teach men systematically about Him, and we shall boldly herald the good news of what He has accomplished by His death. But we shall not fail to commend Him to our hearers out of our own personal experience.[158]

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[158] John Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Group, 1961), 74.

Perhaps one of the most striking similarities among these three exemplars was that they each intentionally shared their own story through the language of universals. Greg Koukl, during the Berkley lectures, shared his story, during the introduction of his talk. Dr. Ravi Zacharias and Dr. William Lane Craig shared their stories in each of the three venues at the conclusions of their talks.

These personal illustrations and "Affirmations of Universals" were some of the most persuasive moments of these nine events. It appeared to me that the more personal the story and the more universal the idea, the more it encouraged audience members to "complete the process from within."[159] As Kenneth Burke writes, "Only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice within."[160] "Affirmation through Universals" seemed to be the most effective rhetorical skill for speaking in the language of our audience's "voice within," especially when it was coupled with personal-experience language.

In addition to the first observation, namely the priority given to the rhetorical skill of "Identification Through Affirmation of Universals" by the three exemplars, the second observation which arose from this research is the how Kenneth Burke's theory of identification as carried out by these exemplars paralleled the manner in which God communicated with us, through the incarnate Jesus. For the purpose of this research I developed three evaluative categories relating to Kenneth Burke's theory of identification; "Identification through Association," "Identification through Disassociation," and "Identification through Affirmation of Universals." These tools helped me to observe the identification and collaboration the exemplar was intentionally seeking to gain.

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[159] Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 39.

[160] Ibid.

Throughout the research it became apparent that these exemplars modeled a paradigm initiated by God. Identification is not a rhetorical skill or strategy in an *impersonal* sense, quite the opposite. Identification is a way of joining with another person, or audience. As Quentin Schultz writes:

> God's grace enables us to let go of our immediate assumptions and preconceptions so that we can identify with others. We no longer merely observe others; we begin to participate with them. When we communicate, we don't just exchange messages; we leave ourselves temporarily in order to enter into someone else's experience.[161]

The three rhetorical skills and strategies toward gaining identification and collaboration used on the template for evaluating the exemplars were means to the end of joining with an audience in a common experience.

This identification is precisely what God did in the incarnation of Jesus; He identified with us. As singer/songwriter Michael Card writes about God's identification with us through Christ, "He has come to share the danger as well as the drudgery of our everyday lives. He desires to weep with us and to wipe away our tears."[162] Jesus was God's great identification with humanity. In this sense, these exemplars demonstrated the same value as God when they sought identification with their audience or debate opponent. Schultze states:

> Every time we identify with someone else we practice what God perfected in Jesus Christ. God took the form of a human being in order to identify fully with humankind. Christ touched the lepers and spoke with the prostitutes and the tax collectors. He communed with all types of people in all social classes, regardless of their standing in the religious community. As God's image bearers, we share some of that ability to identify with others every time we communicate.[163]

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[161] Quentin J. Schultze, *Communicating for Life; Christian Stewardship in Community and Media* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 36.

[162] Michael Card, *Immanuel; Reflections on the Life of Christ* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1990), 27.

[163] Schultze, *Communicating for Life; Christian Stewardship in Community and Media,* 36.

These exemplars illustrated the importance of seeking identification through communication as a means of embodying the person of Jesus. In this way, these exemplars reminded me that Jesus sought identification, and as His people, we must do the same.

An additional rhetorical skill observed regarding "Embodying Jesus verses Presenting Christ" involves the use of humor as a means of developing relational connection from the pulpit or stage. Each of these three exemplars used humor masterfully at various points in their interaction with the audience. In each instance their humor appeared to enhance their ethos.

For example, during the question and answer section of the Berkeley lectures, Greg Koukl had a young Muslim man come to the microphone to challenge him on the Christian world-view. This was the second time this young man walked forward to raise an objection, so the audience was aware of this young man's hostility toward Greg. The young man appeared nervous and prefaced his question with the statement, "Ummm, I'm not a good public speaker." Greg quickly and light-heartedly replied, "You're doing fine. You're funny, that's the first step. You've got a good start." The audience laughed, as did the young man, and this kind-hearted humor relaxed the mood. It was clear from this use of humor that Greg's desire was to do more than present the truths of Christianity, he wanted to be a good representative of a kind and considerate God. Humor, if appropriate and edifying, is a good method of disarming conflict and enhancing ethos as an ambassador of Christ.

In conclusion, perhaps the strongest advantage to "Embodying Jesus verses Presenting Christ" is that it is the method of communication which seems appropriate, or organic, to the human journey. While we can know truth about God definitively, no person knows all truth *exhaustively*. This is perhaps one of the most understood universals –

everyone is on a journey to grow and develop in their understanding of truth. Nobody has

cornered the market on truth, so nobody should come across as prideful about their

knowledge. Yet, often, a person "Presenting Christ" does just that, because the focus is on

the knowledge the Christian knows that the non-Christian doesn't.

If a person seeks to Embody Jesus, he seeks to present a person, not merely his

knowledge. Embodying Jesus displays a Christian's acceptance of the idea that he is not

perfect in their understanding. The Christian, much like the person with whom he is in

dialog, is on a journey. Shane Hipps states this well:

> We assume that both Christians and non-Christians are in need of ongoing
> conversion experiences, a continual process of redemption, reconciliation,
> and daily conforming to the likeness of Christ. The categories of believer
> and nonbeliever still have significance, but they are beginning to serve a
> different purpose. They are no longer used to define a target for evangelism.
> Rather, they inform the starting point and tone of our conversation.[164]

This statement affirms the journey-aspect of human experience. It affirms the point

that merely presenting the truth of Christ without opening up our entire lives to represent

the person of Christ to the entire life of our listener is short-sighted. It's a small, unbiblical

vision of being an ambassador for Jesus. A person seeking to embody Jesus invites a person

into God's work in his life, encourages identification and collaboration, and then sends the

person out encouraged to consider God for themselves. Again, this enables a follower of

Jesus to "speak in the language of a voice within,"[165] encouraging self-persuasion.

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[164] Shane Hipps, "But Now I See," *Christianity Today*, Vol. 28 No. 3 (Summer 2007): 21-24.

[165] Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 39.

Embodying Jesus Verses Winning Discussions

Wayne Booth provides a vital contribution to the discussion on embodying Jesus in *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric.* In his section titled "Judging Rhetoric," Booth examines three motives for rhetorical appeal: "Win-Rhetoric (WR)," "Bargain-Rhetoric (BR)," and "Listening-Rhetoric (LR)."[166] From Booth's discussion I developed a rhetorical skill and strategy for my template labeled "Listening-Rhetoric."

Booth finds little value in "WR," some value in "BR," and tremendous value in "LR," if the rhetorician's motives are noble. Booth emphasizes how "LR," if it is used to "engage in genuine listening," or to "listen to [opponent], hoping to discover some way to engage him in genuine dialog," has inherent value, even if persuasion doesn't occur. Ajith Fernando promotes this idea, as well, when he makes the following statements regarding dialog with people of other faith systems:

> In our hearts we long for the conversion of these people. But the rules of the discussion may prevent us from using persuasion in the way we understand it as practiced in evangelism. Such discussions become a means to understanding other faiths in a richer way than through general study. Our newfound understanding will enhance our proclamation and prepare people to receive the Christian message.[167]

I was hoping to see more "Listening-Rhetoric" displayed as a rhetorical skill throughout these nine venues. Not seeing more display of the skill "Listening-Rhetoric" was likely because of the nature of these events – apologetic, polemical, debate-formatted – but I consistently observed a desire to win, or persuade the opponent or audience to the exemplar's position. With all three exemplars, "LR" was the least-observed rhetorical skill.

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[166] Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric*, 43-50.

[167] Ajith Fernando, *Sharing the Truth in Love; How to Relate to People of Other Faiths* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 2001), 37.

The Christian ambassador seeking to embody Jesus rather than present Christ ought to have a similar rhetorical appeal that Jesus had; namely, Jesus sought to understand, listen to, respect, and display interest in the seekers he encountered. What's more, the fact that *we are not* Jesus, meaning, we sin and "see in a mirror dimly,"[168] means that are on the same journey toward better understanding and more truth, just like those we are with whom we are in dialog. Displaying this appropriate humility is a value behind both Kenneth Burke's and Wayne Booth's rhetorical appeal. As Schultze states, "As we identify with other's foibles, we recognize that we are all imperfect people who need other's patience and understanding."[169] We who have the Spirit of Jesus living in us, working with God as He makes His appeal through us, ought to operate from the same motives.

Embodying Jesus involves holding to a different goal, or desired outcome, when encountering people of other faiths – We do not seek to win a discussion, we seek to represent the person of Jesus. This necessitates the highest form of theology, that which believes that the truest, deepest spiritual work, if it is to occur in within the person with whom we're in dialog, is to occur by God's hand, not ours. We may indeed win a discussion or debate, patting ourselves on the back for our skillful presentation or truth, while at the same time hinder a person from experiencing the God we supposedly represent.

God expects much more from His ambassadors than a skillful presentation of the truth in order to win a discussion. That is the wrong motive. Someone seeking to embody Jesus holds the single-minded motive of glorifying God by being a faithful witness; a faithful witness in the manner described by Stott: "It is not just that we must take great pains to be accurate in our exposition of the Word of God, but that we must neither overstate nor

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[168] I Corinthians 13:12 ESV

[169] Schultze, *Communicating for Life; Christian Stewardship in Community and Media,* 38.

understate the facts of our own experience."[170] Our goal is to please God by being a faithful witness, not to win or bring about a result we expect or desire. The spiritual work and results are God's business. Someone embodying Jesus keeps this distinction clear in his motives during his rhetorical appeal.

Future Study

The purpose of this project was to investigate what rhetorical principles can be derived from evaluating three exemplar apologists who embody Jesus, rather than present Christ, to secular, postmodern audiences valuing religious tolerance. The research confirmed that Christian communicators are effective when they seek to do more than merely present Christ as a series of intellectual or philosophical arguments. This study affirmed that embodying Jesus as a priority for Christian communication is an effective way of carrying out the ambassador function Paul describes in II Corinthians 5:20.

Future research would be helpful regarding the examination of other means of gaining identification and collaboration. For this project, three evaluative categories were developed to examine identification as a rhetorical skill and strategy, but there are certainly more than three means of gaining identification as Burke defined. Research which explored possible other rhetorical skills and strategies would make a valuable contribution.

Another area of future study could involve examination of embodying Jesus during informal discussions; meaning discussions between a Christian and a non-Christian. This project looked primarily at the larger, formal setting of a Sunday message, an academic debate, or a question/answer format. Most of an ambassador-for-Christ's opportunities to embody Jesus occur on a much less synthetic, formal level, as we converse daily with the

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[170] Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait*, 75.

non-Christians in our community. Research examining identification and "LR" in these setting would be helpful.

Conclusion

The compassion and concern God displayed in the incarnation of Christ is the vision for our Christian witness. A person who has been re-oriented by Jesus is commissioned by God to represent the *entire person of* Jesus to their non-believing friends and relatives. As we've discussed in this thesis, this representation involves not merely speaking the words of Christ, but more accurately, displaying the complete person of Jesus.

The message of the gospel exists in a person, not a set of truths. For this reason, an ambassador for God falls short when he views his apologetic appeal as merely presenting Bible verses or truth-claims. An ambassador for God must seek to "Embody Jesus" in all his encounters with others. If he embodies Jesus, his rhetorical appeal will present the compassion and concern of the Savior. This view toward our Christian witness holds the greatest power to introduce people to the person, Jesus, who changed our lives.

Appendix

TEMPLATE FOR EVALUATING EXEMPLARS

Exemplar: _____

Event:

         Venue: _____

         Topic: _____

         Date: _____

Apologetic Method (if applicable): _____

Rhetorical Skills & Strategies:

KENNETH BURKE'S *THEORY OF IDENTIFICATION*

1. Identification through Association:[171] "A speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws an identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and the audience."[172]

    - Normally follows a three step pattern[173]: 1) The process of naming or identifying someone or something according to specific values or qualities; 2) the process of **associating** with the someone or something named by expressing shared values or qualities; 3) the end result of identifying with our audience or opponent, or reaching a state of being consubstantial with others.

2. Identification through Disassociation: A similar rhetorical strategy to "Identification through Association," except the goal is to disassociate from someone or something in order to gain collaboration with an audience or opponent.

    - Normally follows a three step pattern[174]: 1) The process of naming or identifying someone or something according to specific values or qualities; 2) the process of **disassociating** with the someone or something named by expressing unshared values or qualities; 3) the end result of identifying with our audience or opponent, or reaching a state of being consubstantial with others.

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[171] Quigley, *Identification.*

[172] Burke, *A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives*, 95.

[173] Quigley, *Identification.*

[174] Ibid.

3. Identification through Affirmation of Universals:[175] "There must be a re-affirmation of the universal situation, of the universals of experience, of what is common to all men in all places." (Looking for language which describes the universal journey, or situation)

- Very similar to "Identification through Representation" – the difference is that the speaker refers to larger, meta-experiences that all humans at all times can identify with as opposed to describing his/her own experience(s) that an audience can relate with.
  - o I.e. "We're all the same as people, we need to feel loved. And it hurts when we don't receive love." (Rather than, "I went through a period in which I felt unloved."

WAYNE C. BOOTH'S *LISTENING-RHETORIC*

4. Listening-Rhetoric ("Rhetorology"):[176] Using non-verbal and verbal communication to demonstrate a sincere desire and willingness to listen to audience or opponent (debate). "Here both sides join in a trusting dispute, determined to listen to the opponent's arguments, while persuading the opponent to listen in exchange. Each side attempts to think about the arguments presented by the other side."[177] (Looking for language or rhetoric which asks questions, pauses to listen, affirms hearing what others have said, or shows an interest in personal learning)

- Examples of "Listening-Rhetoric:"
  - Quoting back what the other person, or audience has stated.
  - Asking follow-up, clarification questions to display a genuine interest in understanding audience or opponent.
  - Changing an opinion, conceding a point as a result of something the audience or opponent has stated.

OTHER SKILLS & STRATEGIES OBSERVED

5. Rhetorical Skill of Gentleness & Respect: Using verbal and non-verbal communication to display a gentle affect and respect toward audience and opponent (in debate). This skill was observed in Dr. William Lane Craig and finds its biblical support from I Peter 3:15-16; "but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect…"[178]

- This skill is displayed through both verbal and non-verbal communication. For example, remaining calm, non-combative, and gracious displays gentleness and respect. Non-verbal communication such as posture, gestures, and facial expressions remaining kind and non-combative communicate gentleness and respect. Also,

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[175] Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, 41.

[176] Ibid., 46

[177] Ibid., 47.

[178] I Peter 3:15-16 ESV

statements expressing appreciation and admiration for the audience and/or opponent (debate) display respect; i.e. "It is a tremendous honor to address [the Nebraska Atheist's Club] tonight."

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